

**Johnston Forbes-Robertson and the Functions of Theatrical Celebrity,
1880-1920**

Hannah Unwin

Doctor of Philosophy

Newcastle University's School of English Literature, Language and Linguistics

September 2019

Abstract

This thesis contributes to the discussion about the nature of theatrical celebrity and expands on the existing scholarship by exploring in detail the various functions of this particular form of celebrity in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. It achieves this through an extended case study of the actor-manager Johnston Forbes-Robertson. Bridging the Victorian era and the Modern era, he was hailed the last of the actor-managers and occupied a unique place in theatre history between the commercial and new drama. With an emphasis on his most celebrated roles – Hamlet and the Stranger in Jerome K. Jerome’s *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* – the thesis illustrates the fluidity of selfhood across fictive roles and real life, or the perceived real life that is a public persona. It analyses the institutions that created this celebrity and the archival evidence available to illustrate how he established a celebrity status and an identifiable brand. It explores how his relationships with other celebrities became valuable to his own brand and also emphasises the external influences on his celebrity exerted by his public and the press. This thesis investigates how his celebrity identity, with the specific trappings of theatrical culture, functioned in society beyond the jurisdiction of the theatre. It traces how specific facets of his celebrity were manipulated and showcased to endorse and promote consumer products, to champion political and social causes, and to campaign for the improvement of his industry.

Acknowledgements

I would like to wholeheartedly thank my supervisors, Dr Andrew Shail and Dr Rosalind Haslett, for their intelligent advice, encouragement, and unfailing patience over the years. I am very fortunate to have had understanding supervisors who motivate and inspire me. Thank you also to Professor Kate Chedgzoy for her support in my first year of doctoral research, and to all the faculty members at Newcastle University who have offered advice along the way. Thank you to Newcastle University for the Research Support Fund during the early years. I am indebted to the archival staff at the British Film Institute (especially Steve ‘the technician’), the British Library, and the Bristol Theatre Archives for assisting with my numerous queries and unearthing some very dusty boxes, and to New York University Abu Dhabi and Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi for granting me visiting scholar privileges. Major thanks go to family and friends for all the help (and offers of help) with childcare, accommodating me during archival visits, and carrying/depositing books around the world. To Martin – without you none of this would have been possible: from funding my fees and books (those you know about and those you don’t), to running our house, and doing more than your share of childcare. Finally, thank you to Elizabeth and Katie, who made the PhD process infinitely more interesting. I hope I have inspired you both to work hard and to find pleasure in the pursuit of knowledge.

Table of Contents

	Introduction	p. 1
0.1	Forbes-Robertson's Life and the Theatre Industry	p. 3
0.1.1	<i>First Professional Theatre Appearance and Music Halls</i>	p. 4
0.1.2	<i>Early Career, the Long Run, and Touring</i>	p.5
0.1.3	<i>Shakespeare</i>	p. 7
0.1.4	<i>Actor-Management and Economic Prosperity</i>	p. 8
0.1.5	<i>Experimental Theatre and USA Tours</i>	p. 11
0.1.6	<i>The Passing of the Third Floor Back</i>	p. 12
0.1.7	<i>A Knighthood and Respectability</i>	p. 12
0.1.8	<i>Forbes-Robertson and The Film Industry</i>	p. 14
0.1.9	<i>Filming Theatre</i>	p. 14
0.1.10	<i>Cinema's Mass Audience</i>	p. 16
0.2	The Significance of Forbes-Robertson's Celebrity	p. 18
0.3	Celebrity Terminology	p. 21
0.4	A History of Celebrity	p. 25
0.4.1	<i>Celebrity in the Romantic Period</i>	p. 26
0.4.2	<i>Victorian Celebrity and Industry</i>	p. 27
0.4.3	<i>Film Celebrities</i>	p. 29
0.4.4	<i>Politics</i>	p. 30
0.4.5	<i>Audiences and Publics</i>	p. 33
0.5	Approaching Celebrity	p. 38
0.6	Thesis Outline	p. 39
Chapter 1.	Becoming a Celebrity	p. 41
1.1	Introduction: the Pillars of Celebrity Culture	p. 41
1.2	An Individual	p. 45
1.2.1	<i>Physical Gifts: Beauty and Aestheticism</i>	p. 45
1.2.2	<i>Typecasting the Romantic Lover</i>	p. 53
1.2.3	<i>Ellen Terry and the 'Romantic Juvenile'</i>	p. 56
1.2.4	<i>Mary Anderson and the USA</i>	p. 60
1.2.5	<i>Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Notoriety</i>	p. 70

1.2.6	<i>Engaging Gertrude Elliott</i>	p. 75
1.3	Utilising the Media	p. 77
1.4	The Consumption of Celebrity: Postcards	p. 90
1.5	Conclusion	p. 107
Chapter 2.	Hamlet: a Brand and a Ghost	p. 109
2.1	Introduction	p. 114
2.2	Hauntology	p. 114
2.3	<i>Hamlet</i> at the Lyceum in 1897	p. 117
2.4	The UK Farewell Tour	p. 126
2.5	Farewell Season at Drury Lane	p. 131
2.6	Gaumont-Hepworth <i>Hamlet</i>	p. 145
2.7	Purpose of the Film	p. 167
2.8	The Ghost of Hamlet	p. 170
2.9	The Stranger	p. 172
2.10	Conclusion	p. 176
Chapter 3.	Meaning Transfer: Celebrity Endorsement, Activism, Politics, and Diplomacy	p. 181
3.1	Introduction	p. 181
3.2	Celebrity Endorsement of Commodities	p. 184
3.3	Celebrity Endorsement of Buildings, Places, and Events	p. 212
3.4	Forbes-Robertson and Women's Suffrage	p. 221
3.4.1	<i>Forbes-Robertson's 'Declaration of Faith'</i>	p. 227
3.4.2	<i>Forbes-Robertson Branding for Women's Suffrage</i>	p. 232
3.4.3	Passing and <i>'The Cause'</i>	p. 234
3.4.4	<i>Merging of Selves, Hamlet the 'Reformer'</i>	p. 236
3.5	The AFL and Charitable Fundraising During the War	p. 242
3.5.1	<i>Fundraising for the British Women's Hospital</i>	p. 243
3.5.2	<i>Fundraising for Scottish Women's Hospitals</i>	p. 248
3.6	Entertaining Troops	p. 254
3.6.1	<i>The Shakespeare Hut</i>	p. 255

3.6.2	<i>Distributing the Shakespeare Memorial Book</i>	p. 258
3.7	Diplomacy During the War	p. 259
3.8	Conclusion	p. 271
Chapter 4.	Celebrity Within the Theatre Industry	p. 273
4.1	Introduction	p. 273
4.2	Societies, Committees, and Associations	p. 274
4.2.1	<i>Professional Bodies in the Victorian Period</i>	p. 275
4.2.2	<i>Forbes-Robertson's Early Involvement</i>	p. 277
4.2.3	<i>The Actors' Association (AA)</i>	p. 279
4.3	The National Theatre	p. 280
4.3.1	<i>Forbes-Robertson's Early Management</i>	p. 282
4.3.2	<i>Playing Shaw</i>	p. 291
4.3.3	<i>The Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Movement</i>	p. 300
4.4	The Academy of Dramatic Art	p. 309
4.4.1	<i>The History of Founding a Dramatic School for England</i>	p. 309
4.4.2	Masks and Faces	p. 313
4.5	Conclusion	p. 318
	Conclusion	p. 320
	Bibliography	p. 328

List of Figures, Illustrations, and Tables

Introduction

- Fig 0.1 Forbes-Robertson's sketch of women's hats (1910) p. 36
Fig 0.2 Programme for *The Light That Failed* at New Theatre (1903) p. 37

Chapter 1. Becoming a Celebrity

- Fig 1.1 Diagram of Forbes-Robertson's Theatre Celebrity p. 44
Fig 1.2 Photograph in *The Sketch* of Forbes-Robertson painting a portrait of Elliott (1903) p. 48
Fig 1.3 Forbes-Robertson posing as Eros in Rossetti's *Dante's Dream* (c. 1869-1871) p. 51
Fig 1.4 Forbes-Robertson's portrait of Ellen Terry (1876) p. 59
Fig 1.5 Caricature in *Vanity Fair* entitled 'Forbie' by Leslie Ward (1895) p. 79
Fig 1.6 Photograph of Forbes-Robertson accompanying his interview in *The Englishwoman* (1895) p. 85
Fig 1.7 Photograph of Forbes-Robertson accompanying his interview in *The Strand Magazine* (1895) p. 86
Fig 1.8 Photograph of the study in Forbes-Robertson's house accompanying his interview in *The Strand Magazine* (1895) p. 88
Fig 1.9 Photograph of Forbes-Robertson's dining room accompanying his interview in *The Englishwoman* (1895) p. 88
Fig 1.10 Photograph of the drawing room in Forbes-Robertson's home accompanying his interview in *The Englishwoman* (1895) p. 89
Fig 1.11 Front of postcard dated 15 October 1904 p. 93
Fig 1.12 Back of postcard dated 15 October 1904 p. 94
Fig 1.13 Back of postcard dated 15 October 1912 p. 94
Fig 1.14 Front of postcard dated 10 February 1902 p. 96
Fig 1.15 Back of postcard dated 10 February 1902 p. 97
Fig 1.16 Front of postcard, date illegible p. 98
Fig 1.17 Front of postcard dated 3 January 1904 p. 99
Fig 1.18 Back of postcard dated January 1906 p. 100

Fig 1.19	Front of postcard dated January 1906	p. 101
Fig 1.20	Front of postcard dated (unknown) 1903	p. 102
Fig 1.21	Back of postcard dated 31 December 1903	p. 102
Fig 1.22	Front of postcard dated 31 December 1903	p. 103
Fig 1.23	Front of postcard (unknown date) addressed to Mrs N G Martell	p. 104
Fig 1.24	Back of postcard dated 6 February 1904	p. 105
Fig 1.25	Front of postcard dated 6 February 1904	p. 106

Chapter 2. Hamlet: a Brand and a Ghost

Fig 2.1	Cartoon in <i>Punch</i> alluding to the three reigns under which Forbes-Robertson served (1926)	p. 110
Fig 2.2	'The Church Scene in Much Ado about Nothing by William Shakespeare' by Forbes-Robertson (1884)	p. 113
Fig 2.3	Full-page image in <i>The Graphic</i> depicting the entry of Fortinbras in Forbes-Robertson's production of <i>Hamlet</i> (18 September 1897)	p. 120
Fig 2.4	'Mr. J. Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet' in <i>Haviland's Series of Shakespearean Characters</i> (1909)	p. 125
Fig 2.5	Advertisement for <i>Hamlet</i> in Monroe, Los Angeles (1915)	p. 126
Fig 2.6	Image in <i>The Bournemouth Graphic</i> depicting Forbes-Robertson playing golf (1913)	p. 130
Fig 2.7	Programme cover for Drury Lane Farewell Season performance of <i>Hamlet</i> (1913)	p. 134
Fig 2.8	Illustration of Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet after mortally wounding Claudius in <i>Sphere</i> (29 March 1913)	p. 140
Fig 2.9	Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet, front cover of <i>The Play Pictorial</i> (March 1913)	p. 141
Fig 2.10	Forbes-Robertson, oil on canvas by George Harcourt, reproduced in the Souvenir for Forbes-Robertson's Farewell (1913)	p. 142
Fig 2.11	Poster for Screening at the Academy Picture Palace, Brighton (1913)	p. 149
Fig 2.12	Cartoon of Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet in <i>The Bioscope</i> (1913)	p. 150

Fig 2.13	New Gallery Kinema programme for <i>Hamlet</i> (1913)	p. 152
Fig 2.14	Still from <i>Hamlet</i> (1913) – Queen Gertrude greets Hamlet	p. 162
Fig 2.15	Still from <i>Hamlet</i> (1913) – Hamlet sits in a chair contemplating his father’s death and his mother’s marriage to Claudius	p. 163
Fig 2.16	Act III Scene 4, Hamlet sees his father’s ghost in his mother’s bedroom. Illustration by Hawes Craven (1897)	p. 164
Fig 2.17	<i>Statue of Henry Irving as Hamlet</i> by Edward Onslow Ford (1883)	p. 165
Fig 2.18	Postcard portraying Henry Irving as Hamlet from photogravure by Edwin Longsdon Long (1880)	p. 166
Fig 2.19	‘A Motto for Every Day of the Month’ – words spoken by Forbes-Robertson in <i>Passing</i> (1912)	p. 174
Fig 2.20	Photograph of Elliott and Forbes-Robertson in <i>The Bystander</i> ahead of the opening of <i>Passing</i> at the St. James’s Theatre (1908)	p. 179
Fig 2.21	Advert for the forthcoming release of <i>Hamlet</i> in USA (1915)	p. 180

Chapter 3. Meaning Transfer: Celebrity Endorsement, Activism, Politics, and Diplomacy

Fig 3.1	Poster for Forbes-Robertson’s season at St. James’s Theatre (Autumn 1908)	p. 185
Fig 3.2	Poster for Forbes-Robertson’s season at New Theatre, (Spring 1903)	p. 186
Fig 3.3	Advert in <i>Topeka State Journal</i> (1916)	p. 187
Fig 3.4	De Reszke Advert (1920)	p. 189
Fig 3.5	Table showing the 13 businesses that formed the ITC in 1901 and their purchase prices	p. 192
Fig 3.6	Advert for the ITC (1901)	p. 193
Fig 3.7	Advert for the ITC (1901)	p. 194
Fig 3.8	Wills’s Cigarettes Card, ‘Forbie’, ‘Vanity Fair, 1 st Series No 13’ (reproduced 1902)	p. 197
Fig 3.9	Ogden’s Guinea Gold Cigarette Card, ‘Forbes Robertson’ (1901)	p. 199
Fig 3.10	Ogden’s Guinea Gold Cigarette Card, ‘Forbes Robertson’ (1902)	p. 200
Fig 3.11	Advert for Ogden’s Guinea Gold Cigarettes cards (1901)	p. 201

Fig 3.12	Player's Cigarette Card, 'Forbes Robertson in "For the Crown."' (1898)	p. 203
Fig 3.13	7. Player's Cigarettes, 'Sir J. Forbes-Robertson as "Mark Embury" in "Mice and Men."' from "Actors and Actresses" series (1916)	p. 204
Fig 3.14	Table showing the full set of the 1898 Player's Cigarette series	p. 205
Fig 3.15	Table showing the full set of the 1916 Player's Cigarette series	p. 206
Fig 3.16	Forbes-Robertson posing with a cigarette (circa 1903)	p. 207
Fig 3.17	Stewart & Woolf postcard, <i>Vanity Fair</i> Series 102 with Oowana Soap advertisement featuring Forbes Robertson (circa 1900s)	p. 209
Fig 3.18	Advert for Sunlight Soaps (1884)	p. 210
Fig 3.19	Oowana Soap Advert (1908)	p. 211
Fig 3.20	Newspaper article announcing Forbes-Robertson's inauguration of the Sherman Grand Theatre (22 January 1912)	p. 215
Fig 3.21	Advert for the opening of the Sherman Grand Theatre (26 January 1912)	p. 216
Fig 3.22	Cover of the programme for opening night at the Sherman Grand Theatre (5 February 1912)	p. 221
Fig 3.23	Lena Ashwell with Gertrude Elliott, during the 1911 Coronation Procession	p. 225
Fig 3.24	Cartoon lampooning Forbes-Robertson's 'Declaration of Faith' in <i>The Graphic</i> (13 February 1909)	p. 230
Fig 3.25	Women queuing at Montgomery Hall ahead of Forbes-Robertson's suffrage speech, and Forbes-Robertson with a Sheffield minister (1909)	p. 233
Fig 3.26	Forbes-Robertson arriving at Montgomery Hall to give his speech at the suffrage meeting (1909)	p. 234
Fig 3.27	Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet, photograph by Lizzie Caswall Smith (1913)	p. 240
Fig 3.28	A photograph of the cast of the Barrie Charity Matinee, printed in <i>The Era</i> (June 1916)	p. 246
Fig 3.29	Forbes-Robertson as the Stranger by Ambrose McEvoy (1919)	p. 252

Fig 3.30 Advertisement in *The Times* for Forbes-Robertson's run of *Passing* for SWH (1917) p. 253

Chapter 4. Celebrity Within the Theatre Industry

Fig 4.1 Advert for Otho Stuart's *For the Crown* (1896) p. 287

Fig 4.2 Cartoon of Cleopatra (Elliott) depicted as a 'New Woman' (1907) p. 297

Fig 4.3 Newspaper advertisement for *Masks and Faces* at the Picture House in Nottingham (1917) p. 317

Archives

BFI: British Film Institute

BL: British Library

BTC: Bristol Theatre Collection

M&M: Mander & Mitchenson Collection

NPG: National Portrait Gallery

Introduction

The purpose of this thesis is to contribute to an emerging scholarship on historical variations in celebrity. It demonstrates that the systems for producing celebrities and the methods of achieving and maintaining fame were in place before the twentieth century in the form of late-nineteenth-century theatrical celebrity. While celebrity is the theme of this thesis, Johnston Forbes-Robertson (1853-1937) is the subject.¹ During the 1880s Forbes-Robertson became a renowned stage performer but, over time, a public beyond his theatre audiences recognised his name and image as he cultivated and expanded his celebrity. As a major celebrity with a powerful name and brand Forbes-Robertson's influence over his public became a useful commercial and social tool but, in turn, the public had an element of control in the form his celebrity took. This thesis considers the markets and institutions that produced this public persona and the deliberate processes of manufacturing, maintaining, and disseminating his celebrity profile, rather than simply offering a biography of a famous man. The thesis moves from considering the foundational characteristics and ideologies of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity identity, to assessing how he established these qualities and circulated them among his public to maintain his celebrity status, before exploring the commercial and social functions of this celebrity and how celebrity functioned within the theatre industry.

As the thesis explores the role of theatrical celebrity in the history of celebrity and assesses the importance of celebrity to the theatre industry in the period Forbes-Robertson occupied, it leads to questions of how Forbes-Robertson established his celebrity persona (with the collaboration of other industries and technologies) and what a deconstruction of his various public and private subjectivities shows about which roles and social networks were particularly influential in transferring meaning to his brand. It leads to questions on the significance of the celebrity subject to the public and why the public were fascinated by the private lives of actors. Forbes-Robertson's role as both inheritor and bestower of theatrical and cultural heritage provokes inquiries into how celebrity reputation was appropriated or used as cultural ammunition. The exploration of the social causes that Forbes-Robertson championed prompts questions on how he correlated causes with his established persona and if collaborative celebrity

¹ This thesis adopts the hyphenated form of 'Forbes-Robertson' throughout unless directly quoting a source that uses an unhyphenated form.

efforts can provide benefits for societies and communities. Researching Forbes-Robertson's celebrity career provokes the subject of how he understood his own celebrity – whether he recognised its significance and to what extent he was the owner (and controlled the parameters) of his celebrity and brand. Ultimately, discussions of historical celebrity subjects prompt exploration within the larger concept of what they reveal about their society's values and ideologies.

Though scholarly studies have asked these questions about celebrities generally (expanded upon below), this thesis explores them in the specific context of Forbes-Robertson's career which offers a close analysis of celebrity culture at a particular moment (1880-1920) and in a particular industry (theatre). The study draws on archival evidence – letters, contracts, diaries, photographs, posters, postcards, and numerous newspaper and magazine articles and reviews – to create a picture of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity and the processes of creating celebrity.² It extracts information from his contemporaries' and colleagues' accounts (such as autobiographies). Such sources have limited reliability as the author had his/her own agenda and the anecdotes may not be factual, but they provide useful insights and, where the evidence exists, are supported by quantifiable data. An amalgamation of Forbes-Robertson's own words, press materials, and his public's commentary allows this study to contextualise Forbes-Robertson's celebrity to reveal a historical milieu in which celebrity was thriving. It is fortunate that the archival material available for Forbes-Robertson includes numerous documents from his childhood and early career which help to document how he created his celebrity profile, and the copious number of newspaper articles available following the increase of digitisation of historical newspapers globally allows an insight into his celebrity's reach and scope once he had established it. There is a relative paucity of evidence on how the public consumed Forbes-Robertson's celebrity, but this thesis does highlight the evidence that is available. For example, it refers to numerous reviews in newspapers of Forbes-Robertson's plays which, as Helen Freshwater observes, are sometimes the only written evidence of audience reactions to a theatre performance.³ In addition to reviews there are also first-hand accounts, and written notes from fans that allow access to audience reception of both theatre and celebrity.

² The British Library and the Bristol Theatre Collection both contain catalogued and uncatalogued folders containing souvenirs and documents from Forbes-Robertson's personal and professional lives.

³ *Theatre and Audience* (Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, 2009), p. 36.

This introduction first offers an overview of Forbes-Robertson's career alongside the developments in the theatre industry. The following biography and history refer to general trends that affected Forbes-Robertson, although there were numerous simultaneous varying narratives of theatrical history and experiences within the profession. It highlights his significance to the theatre and celebrity industries. The introduction then defines the terminology used throughout the thesis, and locates this study in the body of existing literature pertaining to theatrical celebrity before turning to an outline of the thesis chapters.

0.1 Forbes-Robertson's Life and the Theatre Industry

Forbes-Robertson was born on 16 January 1853, the first of eleven children, to John Forbes Robertson (1822-1903) and Frances (née Cott, 1828-1902). His Aberdonian father worked as a journalist in Aberdeen, the USA, and across Europe before moving to London in the mid-1840s to work as an art critic and lecturer.⁴ His social networks included intellectuals, artistic, and 'Bohemian' personalities such as the painters Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882) and James Abbott McNeill Whistler (1834-1903), and the poet Algernon Charles Swinburne (1837-1909) who were frequent visitors to the Forbes-Robertson family home in Bloomsbury. Forbes-Robertson was a dayboy at Charterhouse (a prestigious public school in London) from November 1865 to June 1868, and, during school holidays, continued his education in a presbytery in Normandy, France under the supervision of Victor Godfroi (1799-1868) – a priest known for building convents and churches.⁵ At the age of 17, following his passion for painting and with encouragement from Rossetti, Forbes-Robertson became a student at the Royal Academy of Arts (1870-1873).

⁴ He contributed regularly to the *Art Journal*, edited *Art, Pictorial and Industrial* and *Pictorial World* (from 1875), and published *The Great Painters of Christendom, from Cimabue to Wilkie* (1877), 'Personal', *Illustrated London News*, 7 March 1903, p. 345.

⁵ Johnston Forbes-Robertson, *A Player Under Three Reigns* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1925), p. 22; Letters from John Forbes Robertson to his son from 1865 until 1868 discuss his activities in France (learning French, fencing, and swimming), and indicate that his visits to France were probably from 1864 to 1868 – in a letter dated 26 August, 1868, John Forbes Robertson counselled his son to be careful to date his correspondence (M&M, BTC (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO)).

0.1.1 *First Professional Theatre Appearance and Music Halls*

Forbes-Robertson continued to paint throughout his life, but his financial circumstances required him to turn to the stage. On 5 March 1874, Forbes-Robertson made his professional stage debut in William Gorman Wills' (1828-1891) *Mary Queen o' Scots* as the French poet Chastelard. Forbes-Robertson's education, social background and networks meant that he easily found his way into a section of the theatre industry striving for respectability motivated by a desire to be differentiated from music halls – large auditoriums featuring varied entertainments in an informal atmosphere. Music halls had emerged in the 1850s with low admission fees to attract lower wage earners, but, by the 1860s, there were halls catering for diverse audience demographics.⁶ The Alhambra in Leicester Square (opened in 1860), for instance, could seat 3,500 people and diverted audiences from the West End theatres as it targeted a bourgeoisie clientele – particularly fashionable young men.⁷ Under The Theatres Act 1843 music halls were not permitted to perform serious narrative drama, but in 1866 a Select Committee at the House of Commons heard the concerns of music hall owners who wanted to legally present short excerpts from drama. The theatre owners opposing the motion argued that if this were allowed they would lose patrons to the music halls who had the advantage of being able to serve refreshments (including alcohol). They argued that dramatic art could not be appreciated if viewers were allowed to engage in mundane activities (such as eating, drinking, and smoking) in the auditorium. The hearings did not result in any changes to legislation, but they did lead to changes in the regulation of theatres and music halls such as the introduction of inspections at entertainment venues to maintain safety standards to prevent physical injury. The emphasis in theatres was on the maintenance of the

⁶ Theatre admission prices fluctuated over the period as policies and trends changed. In the 1860s, a patron could expect to pay in the region of 6s. (equivalent to £27.68 in 2018) for a seat in the stalls, which became 7s. (£32.89 in 2018) in the 1870s, and then up to 10s. from the 1880s (£48.89 in 2018), (Michael R. Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge: UP, 1991), p. 40). Comparatively, in the 1870s the cost of a seat at the Alhambra music hall ranged from 6d. to 5s. (£2 to £22), (Dagmar Kift, *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict*, trans. by Roy Kift (Cambridge: UP, 1996), p. 63).

⁷Theatre tenants and managers, including the lessees of the Royal Haymarket Theatre and the Adelphi Theatre, opposed an application for a music and dancing licence from the owner of the Alhambra, Edward Tyrrel Smith. They argued that by obtaining the licence Smith would have 'an undue monopoly' for public entertainment in an area that already possessed sufficient venues. They also argued that the theatre lessees had invested heavily in promoting the legitimate drama and the granting of a licence to the Alhambra undermined these efforts and added that the licence would be detrimental to public morality, 'Middlesex Sessions', *The Times*, 13 October 1860, p. 9.

theatre buildings whereas in music halls the focus was on the surveillance of the audience which illustrates the social distinction between the performance venues.⁸

In this competitive environment, the theatres sought to wrest back their patrons from the halls by placing a greater emphasis on audience comfort (remodelling auditorium layouts and appearances), and presenting plays, stars, and acting styles catering to middle-class tastes. According to Michael Baker, the society dramas that became popular between 1860 and 1890 frequently featured bourgeois young men so managers actively sought to recruit actors from affluent backgrounds who had attended public schools (like Forbes-Robertson) as they believed they were best suited to these roles (before this, actors tended to belong to acting families).⁹

0.1.2 Early Career, the Long Run, and Touring

Forbes-Robertson subsequently toured with Ellen Terry (1847-1928) under Charles Reade's (1814-1884) management and supported Samuel Phelps (1804-1878) at the Gaiety. Phelps managed Sadler's Wells Theatre in Islington (1844-1862), where he performed 31 of Shakespeare's plays including lesser-known plays such as *Timon of Athens* and *Pericles*.¹⁰ Phelps was a great mentor to Forbes-Robertson as he diligently guided him through studying his parts.¹¹ In 1878, Forbes-Robertson moved to the Prince of Wales Theatre under the management of 'The Bancrofts' – Marie Wilton (1839-1921) and Squire Bancroft (1841-1926) – who he would later credit with having 'done more, perhaps, for the stage, both before and behind the curtain than we appreciate'.¹² His first engagement with the Bancrofts was in *Diplomacy* (1878) followed by *Duty* (1879), *Ours* (1879), *Money* (1880), and *School* (1880). In Forbes-Robertson's final

⁸ Tracy C. Davis, *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: UP, 2000), p. 68, and Tony Fisher, *Theatre and Governance in Britain, 1500-1900: Democracy, Disorder and the State* (Cambridge: UP, 2017), pp. 253-256.

⁹ *The Rise of the Victorian Actor* (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1978), pp. 86-89. Tom Robertson (1829-1871) was a pioneer of the society drama as he produced portrayals of middle-class life as the house dramatist at the Prince of Wales Theatre between 1865 and 1870. These plays became known as 'cup and saucer' realism due to the use of domestic props on stage to resemble real life.

¹⁰ Simon Trussler, *The Cambridge Illustrated History of British Theatre* (Cambridge: UP, 1994), p, p. 241.

¹¹ Forbes-Robertson performed with Phelps in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *King Henry IV (Part II)*, *Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, and *Henry VIII*.

¹² 'Forbes-Robertson's Send-Off', *Era*, 14 June 1913, p. 12.

engagement with the Bancrofts he appeared in *Lords and Commons* (1883), *Peril* (1884), *The Rivals* (1884), *Diplomacy* again (1884), *Masks and Faces* (1885), and *Katharine and Petruchio* (1885). In these plays he took on the parts of Sirs, Earls, Sergeants, and Captains. The professional relationships that Forbes-Robertson formed in these early years would profoundly shape his public persona that developed as he became associated with the Shakespeare of Phelps and the romantic comedies of the Bancrofts.

From 1874 until the end of his engagement with the Bancrofts (which ended with their retirement) in June 1885, Forbes-Robertson performed in at least 58 different plays. By this time the industry had moved from a repertory system (whereby an acting troupe quickly rotated plays from their repertoire so an actor would have many roles memorised at a time) towards the 'long run'. For example, on the 5 August 1878, Forbes-Robertson replaced Bancroft in the role of Count Orloff in Clement Scott (1841-1904) and Benjamin Charles Stephenson's (1839-1906) *Diplomacy* at the Prince of Wales Theatre. The play had been running since 12 January 1878 and continued until 10 January 1879. He returned to the same play (albeit in the role of Julian Beauclerc) from 18 November 1884 until 28 February 1885 after the Bancrofts moved to the Haymarket Theatre. The long run of individual plays arose through economic necessity rather than artistic desire due to the high costs of mounting a play.

Between 1885 and 1895 (when he went into management) Forbes-Robertson performed in only 29 roles. The reduced number of plays Forbes-Robertson appeared in was a further result of the long run (for instance, he played only one role throughout the whole of 1892 – Buckingham in Henry Irving's (1838-1905) *King Henry VIII* at the Lyceum which ran for 203 performances from 5 January), and also the impact of touring. As London became connected with towns across the country as a result of the expansion of railway networks from the 1840s celebrities from the London stage were able to travel around the country to perform. Initially, only the star travelled and engaged local actors for the rest of the cast but, by the 1880s, it became popular for the whole company to travel. Tracy Davis explains that, for celebrities of the theatre, touring was a method of extending the profitability of a successful production after the initial investment in its assembly in London and the exhaustion of its audience in the capital.¹³ Between October 1885

¹³ (2000), p. 335. Davis's examination of the Lyceum accounts, compiled by Bram Stoker (manager of the theatre during Irving's lesseeship), reveals that tours were more profitable for London actor-managers than seasons when they stayed in London, ((2000), pp. 222-223).

and June 1886, Forbes-Robertson toured the USA for the first time as part of Mary Anderson's (1859-1940) company. It was common for London-based theatre celebrities to tour the USA as such tours had the potential to be lucrative as performers could travel from town to town with relative ease and be met by large audiences across the country (as opposed to other Anglophone countries such as Australia and the Cape (South Africa) where towns were separated by large distances).

0.1.3 Shakespeare

Throughout the 1880s Forbes-Robertson's celebrity identity began to take the shape that it would hold throughout his career. His association with Shakespeare resonated after he performed in several Shakespeare roles in production with Helena Modjeska (1840-1909; *Romeo and Juliet*, 1881), Irving (*Much Ado About Nothing*, 1882), and Anderson (*As You Like It*, 1885-1886; *Romeo and Juliet*, 1885-1887; and *The Winter's Tale*, 1887). According to Baker, Shakespeare plays were not generally successful at the box office in the Victorian theatres and yet some of Forbes-Robertson's most successful roles were in Shakespeare plays.¹⁴ In 1914 he opined, 'Personally, I have found that Shakespeare pays. The old maxim that he "spelt ruin" has long since been discredited'.¹⁵ Meanwhile, Simon Trussler observes that Irving 'managed to make more money from Shakespeare, and to play him for lengthier runs, than had ever proved possible before'.¹⁶ Forbes-Robertson appeared in Shakespeare productions in large commercial theatres, but small venues (such as converted taverns) also presented Shakespeare plays and so his drama was available to a cross-section of society which illustrates that the status of Shakespeare in the Victorian and Edwardian eras was far from homogeneous either in the production of plays or audience reception.

Muriel St. Clare Byrne (1949) believed that Shakespeare productions followed one of two traditions during this period:

One has been that of spectacle and stars, the one which [John] Gielgud [(1904-2000)] rightly identified as the mainstream of Victorian and Edwardian production. This is the line from the Kembles [the theatrical family that included Sarah Siddons (1755-1831) and John

¹⁴ p. 34.

¹⁵ 'The Theatre of Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow', *Century Magazine*, February 1914, pp. 505-510, p. 507.

¹⁶ p. 253.

Philip Kemble (1757-1823)], through [William] Macready [(1793-1873)], to [Edmund] Kean [(1787-1833)], Irving, and [Herbert Beerbohm] Tree [(1852-1917)]. The other tradition marks a steady progress towards simpler productions and better texts. This is the line of Phelps, Forbes-Robertson, [Frank] Benson [(1858-1939)], [William] Poel [(1852-1934)], and [Harley] Granville-Barker [(1877-1946)].¹⁷

This opinion may be out-dated, but the division identified is a useful concept. For mainstream performers, Shakespeare plays offered an opportunity to present elaborate sets with countless extras in bustling crowd scenes. Popular actor-managers took a great deal of artistic liberty with texts to make Shakespeare plays accessible, swift, and highlight the star actor. The followers of the second Shakespeare tradition reacted against this spectacle in favour of renditions of Shakespeare that were faithful to the original texts and earlier productions.¹⁸ While St. Clare Byrne associates Forbes-Robertson with the second tradition he was also a mainstream commercial performer.

0.1.4 Actor-Management and Economic Prosperity

Between 1889 and 1895 Forbes-Robertson was under the management of John Hare (1844-1921) at the Garrick Theatre where he appeared in modern dramas, such as Arthur Wing Pinero's *The Profligate* (1889). Towards the end of the century, the commercial theatres of the West End prospered courtesy of the fortunate wider economic climate – the result of reduced taxes and free trade policies which allowed industry to flourish and salaries to increase.¹⁹ This economic prosperity expanded consumer culture and demand for entertainment while the improvements to infrastructure, such as the aforementioned expansion of the railways, meant that audiences from a larger halo could travel into London for performances. Ultimately, this resulted in a boom in theatre-building. According to Allardyce Nicoll, there were 19 theatres in London in 1851 but by

¹⁷ 'Fifty Years of Shakespearean Production: 1898 – 1948', in *Shakespeare Survey 2*, ed. by Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge: UP, 1949), pp. 1-20, p. 1.

¹⁸ For instance, Poel preferred a bare stage with screens, Elizabethan costumes, and basic props (Marion O'Connor, 'William Poel', in *Poel, Granville Barker, Guthrie, Wanamaker: Great Shakespeareans. Volume XV*. ed. by Cary Mazer (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 7-54, p. 14, E-book).

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion of the economic history of the nineteenth century, see Alvin Rabushka, *From Adam Smith to the Wealth of America* (New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction Books, 1985).

1899 there were 61.²⁰ In addition, 39 of the 166 UK music halls were located in London in 1900.²¹ In this climate of economic prosperity Forbes-Robertson entered management.

Despite the commercial success of the theatre industry, actor-management was speculative and precarious, but Forbes-Robertson felt compelled to enter management: '[S]everal actors younger than I, had taken up management very much earlier in their careers, and there was nothing for it but to take a theatre if I was to maintain my place'.²² Other male actor-manager contemporaries of Forbes-Robertson include Charles Wyndham (1837-1919), Bancroft (1841-1926), Hare (1844-1921), Tree (1853-1937), George Alexander (1858-1918), Benson (1858-1939), Lewis Waller (1860-1915), John Martin-Harvey (1863-1944), and Gerald du Maurier (1873-1934). These actor-managers are often considered as a homogenous group with Martin Esslin, for instance, describing the London theatre as being 'dominated by a breed of powerful actor-managers'.²³ Traditionally, actor-managers were involved in everything from selecting, casting, producing, advertising, and rehearsing plays, to overseeing the comforts and safety of the audience, dealing with front-of-house staff, balancing books, paying taxes, bills and salaries, and taking care of the physical structures of the theatres.²⁴

The period's economic prosperity also resulted in an increase in the value of land and, therefore, rents on theatre buildings meaning that few individuals had the financial means of sustaining management alone.²⁵ Therefore, over the second half of the century the structures of ownership and management of theatres changed as artistic and financial power passed from individuals to limited liability partnerships and then on to public companies. Barry King observes that

[d]espite the commonplace view of theatre as an area of aesthetic autonomy, by the second half of the nineteenth century, the theatre in Britain led the trend in replacing pre-capitalist

²⁰ *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama: 1850-1900, Vol. 1* (Cambridge: UP, 1946), in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.509588>, p. 28.

²¹ Edward Ledger, 'Music Halls In The United Kingdom', *The Era Almanack*, 1900, *ProQuest*, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.ncl.ac.uk/docview/6971367?accountid=12753>, pp. 91-92.

²² (1925), pp. 164-5.

²³ 'Modern Theatre: 1890-1920', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, ed. by John Russell Brown, (Oxford: UP, 2001), pp 341-379, p. 371.

²⁴ Davis, (2000), p. 162.

²⁵ Clare Cochrane, *Twentieth-Century British Theatre: Industry, Art and Empire* (Cambridge: UP, 2011), p. 54.

and only formally subsumed modes of theatrical production with mature capitalist forms of investment.²⁶

For example, Forbes-Robertson was able to sub-lease the Lyceum from Irving while he toured the US in 1895 in an attempt to reap funds to maintain the Lyceum Theatre.²⁷ In 1899 Irving sold his remaining lease to The Lyceum Theatre Limited and became their employee. After the Lyceum's final performance (Irving's *Merchant of Venice*, 19 July 1902) the costs to make necessary repairs to the building, as required by London County Council (LCC), were so high that the syndicate instead chose to demolish the theatre and build a new one in its place (which opened in 1904 as a music hall). The process from the actor-management system to syndicate was gradual as, the actor and theatre critic, Hesketh Pearson (1887-1964) judged that in 1906 'there were no signs that the actor-management system had entered the last decade of its existence', but it had disappeared by Forbes-Robertson's death in 1937.²⁸ In this climate, Forbes-Robertson never became associated with one theatrical residence as some of his contemporaries did and instead took on short leases from theatres and toured towns across the UK and abroad; in over 20 years, he played only four seasons in London.²⁹

Forbes-Robertson's first production as actor-manager was *Romeo and Juliet* at the Lyceum which opened on 21 September 1895. In the spring of 1897 he took *The Profligate* and *For The Crown* (John Davidson's (1857-1909) adaptation of François Coppée's (1842-1908) *Pour la Couronne*) on a provincial tour and opened *Othello* at the Theatre Royal, Manchester on 30 April 1897. All three plays would feature in his repertoire throughout the rest of his acting career. His leading lady was Mrs. Patrick Campbell (1865-1940) – born Beatrice Rose Stella Tanner, but used her first husband's name throughout her career and was known informally as 'Mrs Pat'

²⁶ *Taking Fame to Market: On the Pre-History and Post-History of Hollywood Stardom* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 90.

²⁷ Davis, (2000), p. 175.

²⁸ *The Last Actor Managers* (London: Methuen, 1950), p. V.

²⁹ Irving managed the Lyceum (1878-1902), Wyndham managed the Criterion (1876-1899), Wyndham's Theatre (1899-1919), and New Theatre (1903-1919), the Bancrofts managed the Prince of Wales Theatre (1865-1880) and the Haymarket (1880-1885), Hare managed the Garrick Theatre (1889-1895), Tree managed Her Majesty's Theatre (1897-1917), Alexander managed St James's Theatre (1891-1918), du Maurier co-managed Wyndham's Theatre with Frank Curzon (1910-1925) and St James's Theatre with Gladys Cooper (1925-1926). Benson was not affiliated with a theatre but with his touring company that performed Shakespeare plays (1883-1933), while Waller and Martin-Harvey had careers that were comparable to Forbes-Robertson in that they only occasionally took leases of theatres in London preferring to tour.

(Chapter 1 looks more closely at their professional and personal relationship). On 11 September 1897, again leasing the Lyceum from Irving and using his costumes, props, and set designs, Forbes-Robertson made his debut in what was to become his best-remembered part: Hamlet. *Hamlet* ran for the remainder of the season before touring in Germany and Holland. Capitalising on his successes with Shakespeare adaptations, Forbes-Robertson also tackled *Macbeth* at the Lyceum on 17 September 1898.

0.1.5 Experimental Theatre and USA Tours

Forbes-Robertson began the new century with an extended rest in Europe during which time his brother and acting manager, Ian Robertson (1859-1936), hired the American Gertrude Elliott (1874-1950) to act as his leading lady. He returned to the stage at the Coronet Theatre in Notting Hill on 7 September 1900 with George Bernard Shaw's (1856-1950) *The Devil's Disciple*, which Shaw had waited to see dramatised since 1896 as mainstream managers were wary of staging his cutting-edge plays. Known as both an influential critic and a playwright throughout the 1890s, Shaw was one of the leaders of a wave of anti-mainstream, avant-garde theatre, inspired by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), that has since been labelled 'New Drama'.³⁰ The New Drama found a home from 1904 at the Royal Court Theatre and then from 1907 at the Savoy under the joint management of Granville Barker and John Eugene Vedrenne (1867-1930), who staged both controversial plays from modern writers and innovative Shakespeare productions.

Forbes-Robertson followed *The Devil's Disciple* with a UK tour after which, on 22 December 1900, Forbes-Robertson and Elliott were married. Over the next four years, Forbes-Robertson managed different theatres, spending the spring season of 1901 at the Comedy and two seasons at the Lyric Theatre. In the former, his rendition of *Mice and Men* by Madeleine Lucette Ryley (1858-1934) ran from 27 January 1902 until 10 December 1902, and the following year he had success with *The Light That Failed*, an adaptation by George Fleming (pseudonym of Julia Constance Fletcher, (1853-1938)) of Rudyard Kipling's (1865-1936) 1891 novel. Forbes-

³⁰ In *The Old Drama and The New* (1923), William Archer argues that modern realist plays (New Drama) were concerned with imitating life in opposition to earlier lyrical or passionate forms of drama, ((Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1923), in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/olddramanewessay00arch/page/n5>). See also Cary M. Mazer, 'New Theatres for a New Drama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. by Kerry Powell (Cambridge: UP, 2004), pp. 207-221).

Robertson successfully exported his celebrity to the USA and he was well-received across the country so, from 1904 onwards, he toured the USA extensively. While in New York, he premiered Shaw's *Caesar and Cleopatra* (30 October 1906), which Shaw had written as a celebrity vehicle for Forbes-Robertson (examined in Chapter 4), although it would not have its first London performance until 25 November 1907 at the Savoy.

0.1.6 *The Passing of the Third Floor Back*

The remainder of Forbes-Robertson's career was influenced by his decision to present Jerome K. Jerome's (1859-1927) modernised morality play, *The Passing of the Third Floor Back* (hereafter *Passing*). In the play a Christ-like Stranger (Forbes-Robertson) arrives at a boarding house ran by Mrs. Sharpe, who tries to cheat him into overpaying for renting a room on the third floor of her house, but his influence makes her honest. He similarly helps the other sinful boarders of the house change their ways. He opened the play at St. James's Theatre on 1 September 1908 and, due to its popularity, subsequently toured it around the UK, USA, and Canada until Spring 1912 at which point, at the age of 59, Forbes-Robertson started to consider retirement. In his biography, he reminisces that his manager, Percy Burton (1878-1948), indicated that his farewell to the stage would take years to complete, in light of which he began his Farewell Tour in Autumn 1912 in the major UK cities before his London Farewell Season at Drury Lane from 22 March until 6 June 1913 – a major theatrical event including Forbes-Robertson's most popular plays: *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, *Othello*, *The Light That Failed*, *Mice and Men*, *Passing*, *Caesar and Cleopatra* and *The Sacrament of Judas*.³¹

0.1.7 *A Knighthood and Respectability*

Subsequent to the successful London farewell and for his contributions to the theatre, George V honoured Forbes-Robertson with a knighthood on 3 June 1913. Irving was the first actor to receive a knighthood in May 1895 – a moment that signified the rise in the social status of actors. In the mid-nineteenth century, performers were considered socially inferior and actresses were associated with the prostitutes who solicited outside of theatres.³² Baker explains, 'the moral corruption laid against the stage was so universal and indiscriminate that it is not always easy to

³¹ pp. 46-47.

³² Baker, p. 48.

identify the grounds upon which it was made' and suggests that it may have originated from the Church's criticism of stage performers' morals.³³ On Forbes-Robertson's transition to the stage, the writer and biographer Frances Donaldson (1907-1994) considered it difficult to imagine 'why his parents so easily allowed him to abandon a career in art [...] and why without hesitation they allowed him to join a profession which was so little respected and, except in the case of the very few, so poorly paid'.³⁴ Respectability was paramount for actors of the Victorian and Edwardian period and (as Chapter 4 demonstrates) during the first two decades of the twentieth century Forbes-Robertson contributed to movements that made professional training available for actors to improve the reputation of the industry and his knighthood acknowledged these efforts.

With the exception of summer breaks, the US and Canadian Farewell Tours ran from October 1913 until his final appearance as Hamlet at Harvard University on 26 April 1916 which officially ended a long and illustrious stage career. Forbes-Robertson retired in the midst of the 1914 to 1918 War so he became involved with arranging performances for fundraising purposes (explored in Chapter 3). Forbes-Robertson's retirement from the stage coincided with the decline of the traditional role of the actor-manager. Trussler remarks that

[o]f actor-managers in the traditional mould, Tree, Alexander, and Hare were dead by the end of the war, [...]. Forbes-Robertson had retired, and other surviving actor-managers of the old school, such as Cyril Maude [1862-1951], Charles Hawtrey [1914-1988], Seymour Hicks [1871-1949], and Oscar Asche [1871-1936], were generally more peripatetic – while many of the newer arrivals, their ambitions and talents not so much histrionic as economic, became commercial impresarios after the modern manner.³⁵

The manager of the theatre and the producer (who was in charge of the creative process on stage) were, by the end of the War, distinct roles. After the War he again came out of retirement for several charitable performances, but made his final public theatre appearance on 20 May 1927 in *Twelfth Night* in aid of the Sadler's Wells Fund, although he continued to give public lectures throughout the 1920s. In addition to his own autobiography, *A Player Under Three Reigns* (1925), he introduced a publication of Oscar Wilde's drama *The Duchess of Padua* (1923, written in 1883), and introduced *Studio and Stage* (1924): the reminiscences of Joseph Harker (a London scene painter).

³³ p. 44.

³⁴ *The Actor-Managers* (Chicago: Henry Regnery Company, 1970), p. 125.

³⁵ p. 285.

0.1.8 *Forbes-Robertson and the Film Industry*

In the final years of Forbes-Robertson's career, he appeared in film adaptations of three of his theatre plays: *Hamlet* (1913), *Masks and Faces* (1917), and *Passing* (1918). Forbes-Robertson's established theatrical celebrity transferred to the British film industry in the context of the 'cinema boom' years (1908 to 1914) where the demand for marketable film commodities led to the use of stage plays for convenient film content, screen celebrities were emerging, and the industry was expanding to appeal to a mass audience.³⁶ Rachel Low (1949) argued that the relationship between the British cinema and theatre maintained the public's interest in British films at a time when the influx of products from abroad (including France, Italy, and the United States) constituted the overwhelming majority of products on the film market.³⁷ Ahead of the Hepworth/Gaumont film version of Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet*, Harry Furniss complained in the trade paper *The Bioscope* that the films exhibited in the UK were mostly foreign and there was a need for more English films.³⁸ However, filming stage plays had precedent; as early as 1899 British Mutoscope and Biograph Company released four short films showing scenes from Tree's stage production of *King John*. Judith Buchanan approximates between 250 and 300 instances of Shakespeare scenes or plays being adapted for silent film between 1899 and 1927 by British, American, French, Italian, German, and Danish companies.³⁹ From 1902 these plots could be clarified by accompanying intertitles (easily substituted when the film was traded across language barriers), and the films were usually accompanied by music and, occasionally, a lecturer to narrate.

0.1.9 *Filming Theatre*

The year before Forbes-Robertson appeared in *Hamlet*, a French company, L'Histrionic Film, adapted *Les Amours de la Reine Elisabeth* (1912) for the screen from a play of the same name – the first feature film on the subject of Elizabeth I. It was directed by Louis Mercanton (1879-

³⁶ Nicholas Hiley, 'Nothing more than a "craze"': cinema building in Britain from 1909 to 1914', in *Young and innocent? The Cinema in Britain 1896-1930*, ed. by Andrew Higson (Exeter: UP, 2002), pp. 111-127.

³⁷ *The History of British Film 1906-1914 (Vol. 2)* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949), p. 130.

³⁸ 'Where are the English films?' *Bioscope*, 13 March 1913, pp. 791-796.

³⁹ *Shakespeare on Film: An excellent Dumb Discourse* (Cambridge: UP, 2009), p. 1-2. See 'Biograph's pioneering film of *King John*', (pp. 57-73) for her discussion of Tree's *King John*.

1932) and starred the theatre celebrity Sarah Bernhardt (1844-1923) as Queen Elizabeth. Bethany Latham (2011) describes how *Les Amours* was a response to some French companies' call for serious and artistic films that 'eschewed the innovative shots and blocking which were coming into common usage in favor of the traditional focus on the carefully staged "scene."'40 For some commentators this marked a regression for cinema, but *Les Amours* proved a success.41 The film featured performers from the Comédie Française, took three months to film, and had a running time of just under an hour (considered long for the period).42 It is likely that the commercial success of *Les Amours* inspired Hepworth/Gaumont to film *Hamlet*.43

Cecil Hepworth (1874-1953), the director for *Hamlet*, explained that, while he preferred original film scripts, making a film from a stage play had the benefit of an existing well-designed plot.44 Another benefit was a recognisable (marketable) title for the film. '[L]ong before multiple-reel films were produced in numbers,' Jon Burrows (2017) argues, 'it had become common practice to foreground particular films as star attractions on handbills and posters'.45 However, there were complications with hiring theatre actors for films. Theatre actors, Hepworth explained, featured more frequently in films from the 1910s partly because

of increased demand for artists and the scarcity of trained film-actors outside the ranks of the regular stock-companies. But their incursion was by no means an unmixed blessing for they were not graciously inclined to a new technique and were over-apt to the opinion that they already knew all that there was to learn.46

⁴⁰ *Elizabeth I in Film and Television: A Study of the Major Portrayals* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2011), p. 17. The principal company behind the movement encouraging cinema to emulate theatre was Film d'Art, whose first film in 1908 was *The Assassination of the Duke of Guise*.

⁴¹ The film was completed with funding by Adolph Zukor (1873-1976), a Hungarian immigrant to the US who formed the Famous Players Film Company (which would become Paramount Pictures in 1914) to distribute the film there. Latham estimates that Zukor invested between \$18,000 (equivalent to £384,000 in 2018) to \$35,000 (£746,000), but that his investment returned \$80,000 (£1.7m), (p. 19).

⁴² Latham, pp. 19-20.

⁴³ Noted in Luke McKernan, 'A Complete and Fully Satisfying Art on Its Own Account': Cinema and the Shakespeare Tercentenary of 1916', *Shakespeare*, 3:3, (2007), 337-351, p. 349.

⁴⁴ *Came the Dawn: Memories of a Film Pioneer* (London: Phoenix House, 1951), pp. 119-121.

⁴⁵ *The British Cinema Boom, 1909-1914: A Commercial History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017), p. 159. This overturns the earlier assertion by Hiley that 'the commodity most patrons wished to buy from the exhibitor was not access to an individual film, but time in the auditorium,' "'At the Picture Palace": The British Cinema Audience, 1895-1920', in *Celebrating 1895: the Centenary of Cinema*, ed. by John Fullerton (London: John Libbey, 1998), pp. 96-103, p. 97.

⁴⁶ pp. 119-121.

Generally, scholarly discussion has criticised the actors for not modifying their stage acting styles for films and considered the films as lacking technically – as ‘mere’ recordings of stage tableaux – with Forbes-Robertson’s *Hamlet* as a typical example. Robert Hamilton Ball (1968) claimed that the ‘deficiencies of Forbes-Robertson’s *Hamlet* film are easy to specify. The essential problem remains of the Shakespeare without the poetry. The interior shots are more theatrical than cinematic’.⁴⁷ Luke McKernan and Olwen Terris (1994) stated that *Hamlet* is a recording of a play and ‘little more than that’. They are critical of the actors’ recitation of lines and the inadequacy of the intertitles to explain the action.⁴⁸ However, despite theatre celebrities’ deficiencies, film companies incentivised them to appear on screen with generous payments: Bernhardt earned \$40,000 (equivalent to £852,000 in 2018) for her participation in *Les Amours* and Forbes-Robertson earned £2,000 (equivalent to £193,300 in 2018) for *Hamlet*.⁴⁹ This indicates that production companies used the play’s/film’s title and performer’s identity to market their films. Burrows (2003) challenges the notion that the incoming theatrical celebrity represented a ‘lack’ or failure of judgement for silent cinema arguing that the use of theatre celebrities in cinema ‘represents a distinctive form of intermedial cinema, which worked towards particular cultural goals’, and that the use of theatre celebrities allowed for experimentation within, and expansion of, the film industry responding to a cultural need.⁵⁰ What Hepworth called a ‘demand for artists’ may be therefore deemed a demand for celebrities.

0.1.10 Cinema’s Mass Audience

The use of recognisable theatre celebrities and stage plays was a tool for bringing audiences to the new purpose-built cinemas across Great Britain (which increased from 2,900 in 1910, to 5,000 in 1914).⁵¹ The cinemas with high-end ticket admission prices (6d) often had ornate

⁴⁷ *Shakespeare on Silent Film: A Strange Eventful History* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1968), p. 197.

⁴⁸ *Walking Shadows: Shakespeare in the National Film and Television Archive* (London: British Film Institute, 1994), p. 46.

⁴⁹ In 1911, Tree earned £1,000 (approximately equivalent to £100,000 in 2018) for appearing as Cardinal Wolsey in his adaptation of *Henry VIII* by Barker Films. All relative values in this thesis are approximate and use a simple purchasing power calculator accessed from <https://www.measuringworth.com/index.php>.

⁵⁰ *Legitimate Cinema: Theatre Stars in Silent British Films, 1908-1918* (Exeter: UP, 2003), p. 14.

⁵¹ Richard Abel, *Encyclopaedia of Early Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2005), p. 283.

Initially, travelling showmen exhibited films at various venues. Nicholas Hiley lists London venues used for film exhibition in 1908 as: music halls, churches, chapels, mission halls,

architecture and elaborate interiors with a focus on comfort. This appears to indicate that the industry desired to attract the bourgeoisie to the cinema, however, these changes did not seek to turn away cinema's existing and thoroughly proletarian audience base. Burrows' exploration of the economics behind the cinema industry of the period reveals that cinema audiences in the 1900s and 1910s cannot easily be categorised by class, as he shows that

the most commercially successful British cinema chain established in the 1910s did not charge less than 6d for admission [a high admission fee], and prospered by cultivating the patronage of 'well-to-do people'. We have also seen that a cinema in a mill town in Derbyshire, where tickets for the cheapest 2d seats accounted for nearly 60% of all adult admissions, actually earned the largest proportion of its income in 1913 from the sale of 6d tickets.⁵²

What it does suggest was that the film industry expanded to target cinema audiences from a cross-section of society: a mass audience. This expansion continued during the First World War – the War followed the boom in cinema building/conversion, so those invested in the industry were eager to continue this prosperity – but it brought changes to cinemas and the content of films. Michael Hammond and Michael Williams (2011) contend that, for film exhibitors, 'the war could not have come at a less convenient time'.⁵³ Personnel in every aspect of film-making, trading, and exhibiting left their careers in the film industry to join the war effort. The introduction of the Entertainments Tax in May 1916 added up to fifty per cent to the cost of a cinema ticket for the rest of the War. Cinema managers had to do all they could to stay in business. These issues furthered the dominance of the US in the distribution of films in British cinemas, from which British film-makers would never recover.⁵⁴

Salvation Army hostels, workhouses, public halls, schools, shops, and a canvas tent. He argues that this cinema building amounted to an investment boom, rather than a response to public demand for purpose-built cinemas as supply outstripped demand and towns found they had too many cinemas competing for audiences. However, Burrows and Richard Brown conclude that this is not an accurate analysis of the situation as Hiley did not consider the large number of unincorporated film exhibitors in the sector. Hiley, (2002), p. 113, p. 122; Burrows and Brown 'Financing the Edwardian Cinema Boom, 1909–1914', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television*, 30.1 (2010), pp. 1-20, p. 15.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 226.

⁵³ 'Goodbye to All That or Business as Usual? History and Memory of the Great War in British Cinema,' in *British Silent Cinema and the Great War*, ed. by Michael Hammond and Michael Williams, (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1-18, p. 5.

⁵⁴ Michael Hammond, *The Big Show: British Cinema Culture in the Great War 1914-1918* (Exeter: UP, 2006), p. 5.

In terms of film content, cinema patrons continued to demand feature films, but cinemas also exhibited newsreels, official war films, propaganda and, on occasions, pacifist films. In 1917, a report from the National Council of Public Morals Cinema Commission of Inquiry found that the three functions for the cinema, at that time, were ‘recreative, educational and propagandist’.⁵⁵ Hammond builds on the findings of Andrew Higson (2002) and argues that the cinema’s role became somewhat contradictory: for some it provided an escape from the day-to-day realities of wartime, while for others it was a place to be informed about the war’s developments.⁵⁶ By meeting these differing needs in turn, cinemas increased their attendance and attending exhibitions at the cinema became commonplace. By July 1916 the UK public was spending as much on cinema tickets as other leisure activities (plays, shows, concerts, and sporting events) combined, and 20 million people viewed the August 1916 government film *The Battle of the Somme*.⁵⁷ It was in this context that cinemas exhibited *Masks and Faces* and *Passing*: the former as a vehicle for theatrical stardom and the latter as a platform for a peaceful message in a world at war.

0.2 The Significance of Forbes-Robertson’s Celebrity

This thesis lies at the intersection of theatre history and celebrity studies (as a branch of studies on selfhood and identity). Mole explains the value in exploring the space celebrities occupy within our society:

celebrities function as spectacles of subjectivity, discursive spaces in which society renegotiates understandings of individuality. Celebrity culture, then, is not simply the promotion of particular individuals to public prominence. Rather, it is intricately connected to the history of the self, since it helps to shape the subjectivity of those it promotes, and, by promoting them, to change understandings of subjectivity in general. As well as promoting particular individuals, celebrity culture promotes an abstract notion of the individual as a self-determining agent and as a principle of cultural classification, a way to make sense of the information overload of modernity.⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Michael Hammond and Michael Williams, (2011), pp. 1-18, p. 6-7.

⁵⁶ (2006), p. 3 and p. 247.

⁵⁷ *Picture Palace News*, 22 July 1916, p. 212; Nicholas Hiley, ‘*The Battle of the Somme* and British News Media’, (Péronne: Centre de Recherche de L’Historial de la Grande Guerre, 21 July 1992).

⁵⁸ ‘Introduction’, in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture 1750-1850*, ed. by Tom Mole (Cambridge: UP, 2009), pp. 1-18, p. 12.

A historical approach to celebrity reveals the values important to the self in societies across time and the study of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity subjectivity as a culturally determined product allows an understanding of, not only the theatrical institutions of 1880 to 1920, but also the values of wider society.

The overview of Forbes-Robertson's career demonstrates that he was a significant figure in theatre history, yet there is not a published extended academic study of the role he occupied. He operated in the industry as the structures of the theatre as a business enterprise changed the role of actor-managers. In 1925 Forbes-Robertson reminisced that

during the nineties and the early years of nineteen hundred London was well served with dramatic fare. [...] At present the legitimate drama would appear to be in an unsettled state. [...] In the days of the actor-manager the public had a very fair idea as to the class of play they would find at any given playhouse.⁵⁹

Following Forbes-Robertson's death on 6 November 1937, the *Yorkshire Evening Post* reported that he

can be counted the last of the distinguished line of London actor-managers of the pre-war period [...]. In many ways Forbes-Robertson was the greatest of them all.⁶⁰

Similarly, on the centenary of his birth, *The Belfast Telegraph* wrote that the event

has revived memories of one who enriched the tradition of the great actor-managers. [...] Then in the years of the First World War the actor-managerial system appeared to break up, [... with the actor-managers] went an era in British dramatic history.

Great as these men were, each in his own way, none of them surpassed Forbes-Robertson in acting ability, and only Irving exercised, to an equal degree, the strange mesmeric power over an audience which marks the truly great actor.⁶¹

Actor-managers around the turn of the twentieth century were celebrities as entire business operations (theatre styles and locations, choices of plays) revolved around their public subjectivities. In 1958, Kenneth Gregory explained in *The Tatler* that these actor-managers 'were exponents of the personality cult and slaves only to their own idiosyncrasies'.⁶² He asserted that the new dramatists of the early twentieth century undermined the actor-management system and the War destroyed it. The system might have ended anyway or it may be that the War did catalyse its destruction but, regardless of the impetus, the actor-management system did indeed disappear

⁵⁹ Forbes-Robertson, pp. 184-5.

⁶⁰ 'Last of the Actor-Managers', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 8 November 1937, p. 6.

⁶¹ 'A Great Victorian', *Belfast Telegraph*, 31 January 1953, p. 4.

⁶² Kenneth Gregory, 'This week is the centenary of Sir George Alexander [...]', *Tatler*, 18 June 1958, p. 624.

between 1914-1918. It is as one of the last actor-managers with its particular structures of celebrity, rather than as a great (or greatest) actor, that Forbes-Robertson makes an apposite figure for consideration in this thesis.

In addition to potentially being the last actor-manager in the traditional mould, he also traversed artistic styles. In 1957, Richard Findlater observed that 'Forbes-Robertson has sometimes been described as the last of the old school, in the Kemble-Macready-Irving tradition; he might with equal justice be labelled as the first of the new school'.⁶³ He bridged performance styles and theatre movements appealing to both avant-garde and popular tastes and, thus, a large audience range. He was popular but also considered educational. For example, Point 290 of the Newbolt Report of 1921 (that assessed the teaching of English in schools) stated,

Visits to public performances of plays studied in class are an officially recognised form of educational activity. [...] If we could be sure that pupils would see performances like the Hamlet of Forbes-Robertson, or the Portia of Ellen Terry - if we could merely be sure that they would see nothing that dishonoured the spirit of Shakespeare, we should urge upon teachers the fullest employment of their liberty.⁶⁴

An examination of his career and public profile therefore promises to be illuminating because he traversed schools of drama at a pivotal moment in theatre history.

Forbes-Robertson did not become a leading actor as a result of his acting talents alone but it was determined by his establishing and exporting an identifiable celebrity profile and brand across the UK, US, and Canada. In 1914, a contributor to the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* discussed which plays were popular with US audiences:

They came in their thousands to hear Forbes Robertson, and it did them credit; though whether it was because they appreciated his art, or because they knew him to be a great man on the point of retirement, I will not attempt to say.⁶⁵

The implicit suggestion here is that Forbes-Robertson's celebrity as a 'great man' was more of a draw for US audiences than his performances, and yet scholarly discussions have sidelined or misunderstood the place of the theatre in the history of celebrity. This thesis redresses his

⁶³ *6 Great Actors* (London: Hamilton, 1957), p. 178.

⁶⁴ *The Newbolt Report, The Teaching of English in England*, (London: HM Stationery Office, 1921), pp. 317-318, <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/documents/newbolt/newbolt1921.html>, [accessed 7 January 2017].

⁶⁵ J. W., 'Round the Theatres', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 21 March 1914, p. 5.

theatrical legacy by highlighting the success of the theatrical career of Forbes-Robertson by resituating it through the lens of celebrity.

0.3 Celebrity Terminology

Forbes-Robertson (on occasions) was simultaneously famous, a star, and a celebrity. Terms such as ‘fame, ‘star, and ‘celebrity’ are in popular use but they are ambiguously defined. For the purposes of this thesis, fame is a condition by which an individual (or their name) is widely-known or recognised without a necessity for a particular accomplishment (for instance, Forbes-Robertson was likely to have been known to most members of his audience but it is unlikely that he knew as many of them). By contrast, a star is used to refer to the lead artist in a spectacle as, Antoine Lilti (2017) explains, it has been used since the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁶⁶ In this sense, a star is a commodity or, as Andrew Shail (2019) details, ‘a person whose identity is treated, by the mechanisms of publicity employed by their profession, as a production value’.⁶⁷ This would normally indicate (although not necessarily) that the individual achieved this position from talent or endeavour.

This thesis uses a model of celebrity consisting of three components – an individual, industry, and a public. The individual is the body comprising multiple selves (public, private, fictive), which is then projected through various industries to a public who consumes and interprets the celebrity. Similar models of celebrity culture underpin the analyses of Michael Quinn (1990), who presents the interactions of individuals, audiences, and institutions as the foundations of celebrity, and Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (2005), whose celebrity studies focuses on the transactions of individuals, institutions, markets, and media.⁶⁸ Comparably, Tom

⁶⁶ (trans. Lynn Jeffers), *The Invention of Celebrity, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017), p. 7, Kindle ebook.

⁶⁷ He defines a production value as ‘an element of the material or labour that goes into the production of a cultural work that both a) necessitates expenditure *and* b) is publicised as having necessitated expenditure’. *The Origins of the Film Star System: Persona, Publicity and Economics in Early Cinema* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), p. 7.

⁶⁸ ‘Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting’, *NTQ*, 6, (1990), doi-10.1017/S0266464X0000422X, pp 154-161, p. 154; ‘Introduction: The Singularity of Theatrical Celebrity’, in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain 1660-2000*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 1-11, p. 1.

Mole (2007) identifies the pillars of celebrity culture as audience, industry, and individual.⁶⁹ Essentially, they tell the same story: the interlocking of these pillars creates a commodity with an exchange value which functions in society. Celebrity is created by industry – in this case of Forbes-Robertson, the primary industry was the theatre industry and the secondary industries were the newspapers, printing of playbills, and photography that reproduced the celebrity. However, the media cannot create celebrity from nothing and so an individual contributes and, to some extent, controls subjectivity. In this thesis consumers of celebrity are designated by the term ‘public’ rather than ‘audience’ as an audience refers to the patrons in a theatre viewing a performance, whereas Forbes-Robertson’s public also included people who had never seen him perform but were still conscious of his celebrity. Chapter 1 explores how Forbes-Robertson and the media interacted to bring celebrity to the public. The concept, known as ‘public intimacy’, is a way of creating an illusion that celebrities are accessible and have a direct relationship with their public by allowing them into their lives. This public then actively influences the shape of celebrity as without the public’s approval no amount of media coverage will turn an individual into a celebrity.

To consider Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity is to consider the persona perceived by his public. Of course, there existed other subjectivities that interacted to create this persona and, to avoid confusion, the lexicon used to describe these subjectivities should be clarified. When Forbes-Robertson appeared on stage (after he established himself as a celebrity), the audience saw the character he was playing (Hamlet, the Stranger, etc.) which is referred to as his ‘fictive role’. His ‘public persona’ was the identity the audience attributed to the performer or the identity Forbes-Robertson projected of himself in the media. Meanwhile, his ‘private self’ was the individual that emerged when he went home from the theatre.

As Chapter 1 explains, by 1881 Forbes-Robertson appeared in newspaper columns titled ‘Celebrity at Home’ in the *World* newspaper, demonstrating the popular use of the term celebrity and indicating that Forbes-Robertson would have understood himself to be a celebrity in his time. The *OED* lists two definitions of celebrity as a noun (as it refers to a person rather than a ceremony or a rite). In the first, celebrity is something attributed to the individual or something

⁶⁹ *Byron’s Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 3.

that someone *has*. In the second, celebrity is something that an individual *is*.⁷⁰ The earliest known use of the word in the first sense can be traced as far back as Chaucer in the fourteenth century, while the *OED*'s earliest example of 'celebrity' being used to describe an individual's condition dates from 1831, which illuminates the modern foundations of the experience of 'being celebrated' as opposed to 'being "a celebrated"'. The *OED* also notes that the first definition was, in its early usage, frequently synonymous with *fame*, 'but later often distinguished as referring to a more ephemeral condition' with evidence of this change from at least 1863. This division of fame and celebrity coincides with a shift identified by P. David Marshall (1997), who explores the semantics in the *OED*'s listed examples to show that there was a shift in the use of celebrity around the middle of the nineteenth century.⁷¹ Therefore, Forbes-Robertson's contemporaries not only had the conditions for creating celebrity but the lexicon for understanding it.

The second half of this thesis studies the ways that Forbes-Robertson's celebrity functioned in society besides drawing audiences to the theatre. His celebrity image advertised consumer goods and services, and he endorsed public spaces and brought awareness to political issues. The value of a case study of Forbes-Robertson's political activity lies in the diversity of his activities; he was involved in political persuasion, charitable fund-raising, philanthropy, and diplomacy. For example, Chapter 3 shows that he was a candid spokesperson for women's suffrage, became a source of unofficial First World War news and alliance-making, and appropriated his performances as fundraising ventures.

In the twenty-first century scholars are forging a vocabulary to discuss the nuances of celebrities' political activity and the terms coined prove to be equally applicable to Forbes-Robertson's career. Forbes-Robertson was what John Street (2011) terms a CP2 – a celebrity politician who typically belongs to the entertainment world but has used his or her celebrity to appear in the public sphere as a representative of people and causes (by speaking at rallies,

⁷⁰ The first definition is: 'The state or fact of being well known, widely discussed, or publicly esteemed. Later usually: personal fame or renown as manifested in (and determined by) public interest and media attention'. The second definition is: 'A well-known or famous person; (now chiefly) *spec.* a person, esp. in entertainment or sport, who attracts interest from the general public and attention from the mass media'. 'Celebrity', in *OED* [online], <<http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/29424?redirectedFrom=celebrity#eid>> [accessed 25 March 2017].

⁷¹ *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture* (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997 repr. 2014), p. 4.

producing theatre performances and films, meeting politicians), but does so without being elected to this position.⁷² For instance, he was not elected or nominated to work towards suffrage for women but appears to have committed to the cause at his own volition. This type of work where an individual serves the cause of another is viewed as advocacy. Dan Brockington (2014) explains that the celebrity may benefit in the process of advocating for another, but it continues to be advocacy.⁷³ Yet, as Chapter 3 demonstrates, Forbes-Robertson's contributions to women's suffrage went beyond speaking on behalf of the cause when the opportunity arose, to actively coordinating events to lecture to large gatherings on the subject with other professionals. In this capacity, his advocacy elevated to 'activism'.

George Pleios (2011) emphasises activists as supporters or propagandists of a cause, whereas a diplomat is appointed by an organisation or state to act on their behalf.⁷⁴ In 1964, Forbes-Robertson's daughter, Diana (1914-1987), related that during the War he had been offered a peerage in exchange for doing government propaganda work, but had refused.⁷⁵ The details and validity of this claim cannot be confirmed, but Chapter 3 evidences how he actively contributed to recruitment drives, attended functions and events (sometimes even labelled as a representative of England in endearing the US to the Allied cause), and commentated on war activity (mostly to US journalists) despite him being neither an elected politician nor a member of the military. These missions required delicate political communication and management, and went beyond being merely involved with a cause or being a spokesperson for a cause to instead championing the cause in political environments and challenging policy-makers rather than just the public. Sally Totman (2017) contrasts a celebrity who uses his/her persona to bring attention to a cause (a 'standard celebrity activist') with one who demonstrates 'expertise and credibility'

⁷² *Mass Media, Politics & Democracy 2nd Edition* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 438. Conversely, for Street a CP1 is primarily a politician who engages in popular and celebrity culture in order to gain political merit. Discussions of CP1s (in particular US Presidents John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, or, in UK politics, New Labour under Prime Minister Tony Blair) dominate discourses of celebrity politics in the first decade of this century. See West and Orman 2003; Turner 2004; Street 2004 and 2012; Philip Drake and Michael Higgins, 'I'm a celebrity, get me into politics': The political celebrity and celebrity politician', in *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 87- 100; Wheeler 2006 and 2013; Thrall 2008.

⁷³ *Celebrity Advocacy and International Development* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014), p. xxii.

⁷⁴ 'Fame and Symbolic Value in Celebrity Activism and Diplomacy', in *Transnational [...]*, pp. 249-262, p. 256.

⁷⁵ *Maxine*, (London: Hamilton, 1964), p. 5.

in their support (a ‘super-celebrity activist’.⁷⁶ This thesis prefers the term ‘activist’ for the former celebrity and ‘diplomat’ for the latter.⁷⁷

0.4 A History of Celebrity

This thesis emphasises the significance of theatre performers in the history of celebrity. The scholarly work of theatre historians Michael Booth (1980 and 1991) and Davis (2000) are central to understanding the theatre as a commercial organisation and, subsequently, celebrity studies have begun to explore how the capitalist structures of the theatre industry produced the modern celebrity. Michael L. Quinn (1990) and Marvin Carlson (2003) began earnest scholarly conversations about theatre celebrities as they consider celebrity performers as intertexts of selfhood (discussed further in Chapter 2). The contributors to Luckhurst and Moody’s (2005) *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain 1660-2000* claim that ‘celebrity on and off the stage has scarcely begun to be addressed’ and highlight moments in the substantial history of theatrical celebrity.⁷⁸ This thesis contributes to this collective scholarly movement that has demonstrated that celebrity culture existed from at least the late eighteenth century and was thriving – particularly in the theatre industry. This section contextualises theatre and celebrity across this period and locates this study in the literary landscape on the subject of historical celebrity.

⁷⁶ ‘The Emergence of the “Super-Celebrity Activist”: George Clooney and Angelina Jolie’, in *Becoming Brands: Celebrity, Activism and Politics*, ed. by Jackie Raphael and Celia Lam, (Toronto: Waterhill Publishing, 2017), pp. 21-31, p. 26.

⁷⁷ This is also the stance of Andrew Cooper who categorises celebrity diplomats as those in possession of ‘ample communication skills, a sense of mission, and some global reach. They must enter into the official diplomatic world and operate through the matrix of complex relationships with state officials’. *Celebrity Diplomacy* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), p. 7. Elliott also fits the criteria of a modern celebrity diplomat as in her capacity as President of the Actresses’ Franchise League, she used her celebrity brand to lobby government officials on the issue of women’s suffrage and published letters in newspapers to draw attention to the issue. For example, in a letter dated 19 December 1912 she requested permission to appear at the Bar in the House of Commons and plead the case for women’s suffrage: a request which was refused, but the AFL continued to contend (‘Actresses At the Bar’, *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 20 December 1912, p. 2; ‘Speaker and Actress Suffragist’, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 11 January 1913, p. 5; and ‘A Memorial to the Commons’, *Daily Herald*, 18 January 1913, p. 2).

⁷⁸ p. 1.

0.4.1 *Celebrity in the Romantic Period*

There is a growing body of research identifying the Romantic Period (c. 1750-1850) as the period in which celebrities emerge in various disciplines, such as the poet and politician Lord Byron (1788-1824), boxing champion Daniel Mendoza (1764-1836), man of fashion Count d'Orsay (1801-1852), and Italian military leader Giuseppe Garibaldi (1807-1882).⁷⁹ Celebrities resulted from the period's emphasis on individualism and the development of publicity in the metropolitan centres of Paris and London. Lilti describes the Genevan writer and philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau as 'the first real European celebrity' after his text *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences* (1751) won the Académie de Dijon prize.⁸⁰ He was also the first to describe the burden of well-knownness in *The Confessions of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (written in 1769 but published in 1782) and attempt to escape it. Meanwhile, the Tate Britain Gallery identifies the portrait painter Joshua Reynolds (1723-1792) as London's 'driving force in the creation of a cult of celebrity which is so familiar today' as he not only painted famous individuals but cultivated celebrity by creating networks of influential people.⁸¹

The theatre began to produce its own celebrities at the same time. Theatre celebrities such as David Garrick (1717-1779), Sarah Siddons (1755-1831), and Edmund Kean (1787-1833) rose to prominence and scholarly studies of the culture surrounding their careers is emerging.⁸² In December 1804 William Henry West Betty (1791-1874) arrived in London to perform at the age of 13 and swiftly became a celebrity. His fans rioted for tickets for his performances, gathered

⁷⁹ Tom Mole, *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007); Peter M. Briggs, 'Daniel Mendoza and sporting celebrity: a case study', in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture 1750-1850*, ed. by Tom Mole (Cambridge: UP, 2009), pp. 103-119; Nick Foules, *Scandalous Society: Passion and Celebrity in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Abacus, 2004); and Lucy Riall, 'Garibaldi: the first celebrity', *History Today*, 57(8) (2007), 41-47, p. 43.

⁸⁰ p. 110.

⁸¹ 'Joshua Reynolds: the Creation of Celebrity', 2005, in <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/joshua-reynolds-creation-celebrity>, [accessed 9 November 2017]. In 2005 the Tate Britain Gallery in London displayed an exhibition entitled 'Joshua Reynolds: the Creation of Celebrity' which was accompanied by a text of the same name by Martin Postle (2005).

⁸² Scholars such as Fred Inglis (2010), Barry King (2015), and Leslie Ritchie (2019) have explored Garrick's celebrity. Shearer West (1999 and 2005) and Laura Engel (2009) analyse portraits of Siddons to explore how she maintained her celebrity while Robyn Asleson (1999) and Heather McPherson (2009) discuss Siddons's celebrity as an example of the period's obsession with individual uniqueness. Jacky Bratton (2005) explores Kean's downfall and the public's fascination in the personal lives of celebrities.

outside his home, and fainted at the sight of him as a result of the ‘businesslike media machine’ that created constant media attention.⁸³ This was followed by a period where theatre celebrities spread their global reach such as when Fanny Kemble (1809-1893), niece of Siddons, became, as her biographer Rebecca Jenkins describes, ‘one of the very first cross-Atlantic’ celebrities when she toured the USA in 1832.⁸⁴

0.4.2 Victorian Celebrity and Industry

Celebrity culture continued to expand in the Victorian era and Nell Darby (2017) explains that actors (but more specifically their participating fans) were central to this culture. Irving’s celebrity dominates studies of the Victorian actor-managers. Born John Henry Brodribb to Samuel Brodribb (a travelling salesman) and Mary Behenna (a fervent Methodist) Irving became a clerk at age 13. After performing in amateur acting groups he spent what little surplus money he had on acting and elocution classes and on 29 September 1856 appeared in his first professional performance at the Royal Lyceum Theatre, Sunderland, under the name Henry Irving (as Gaston in Edward Bulwer-Lytton’s (1803-1873) play *Richelieu*). The subsequent route to his knighthood on 24 May 1895 was arduous and he was frequently without work, but in 1878 he began managing the Lyceum with Terry – another theatre celebrity – who assisted his ascent to the head of the acting profession. Jeffrey Richards (2010) details how Irving established his celebrity while King focuses on how Irving operated as a star within the theatre framework as organised business.⁸⁵

Celebrity culture evolves as new technologies and industries overlap. According to Daniel Boorstin (1961), ‘celebrity in the distinctive modern sense could not have existed in any earlier age, or in America before the Graphic Revolution’.⁸⁶ For Boorstin the Graphic Revolution was the development of the telegraph (used in news reporting from the 1830s) and the rotary press of the mid-1840s (that made printed matter cheaper to produce and, therefore, distribute). Further

⁸³ Jeffrey Kahan, *Bettymania and the Birth of Celebrity Culture* (Pennsylvania: Lehigh UP, 2010), Elib ebook, p. 17.

⁸⁴ *Fanny Kemble: A Reluctant Celebrity* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2005), p. 1.

⁸⁵ Chapter 9 ‘Celebrity Culture’ in *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005), pp. 259-281; Chapter 4 ‘Emergent Modes of Stellar Being’, pp. 89-106.

⁸⁶ *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961 repr. 2012), p. 69, Google ebook.

technological innovations at the turn of the nineteenth century allowed for a wider distribution of newspapers and advanced the media industry in a way that facilitated celebrity by providing a connection with an audience. Mole notes the significance of the Fourdiner paper-making machine in this process. Patented in England by brothers Henry and Sealy Fourdiner in 1803, the machine automated the manufacture of paper – a more cost- and time-efficient method than hand-making. The lower cost of paper meant that newspapers and books cost less to produce and could be sold at a lower price, increasing the number of potential purchasers.⁸⁷ The second noteworthy invention is the Stanhope Press (circa 1800), developed by Charles, Third Earl Stanhope. As the first printing press to be made from iron (rather than wood), it offered improved stability when printing and required less manual effort to operate than previous wooden presses as the greater weight of the platen meant that less pressure had to be exerted. Newspapers quickly adopted the press; *The Times*, Mole notes, purchased a ‘battalion’ of such presses which allowed them to increase from four pages to twelve in 1803 and saw their circulation increase.⁸⁸ New forms of journalism emerged (discussed in Chapter 1) to attract a wider reading public for the increased output of reading material. This would have been futile without a mass literate public. In 1840, two-thirds of all grooms and half of all brides in England and Wales were able to sign their names at marriage but this had risen to 97% of each group by 1900 indicating the improvement in national literacy over the century.⁸⁹

Towards the end of the nineteenth century when Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity was emerging, photography was becoming increasingly important to the creation of celebrity (as emphasised in studies by Boorstin and Joshua Gamson (1994)). Printers employed halftone printing methods from the 1880s which allowed photographs to be printed and, increasingly in the 1890s, feature in newspapers where an image could circulate alongside information about an individual.⁹⁰ With this shift came an emphasis on the visual, and images became central to the idea of the modern celebrity and particularly to the stars of another emergent industry: film.

⁸⁷ 2007, p. 31.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁸⁹ David Mitch, ‘The Spread of Literacy in Nineteenth-Century England’, *The Journal of Economic History*, 1.43 (1983), 287–288, p. 287.

⁹⁰ According to John Hannavy, ‘the halftone process translates the tones and detail of a photographic image into a printed pattern of tiny dots’, (*Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography* (London: Routledge, 2008), p. 1117).

0.4.3 *Film Celebrities*

The significant role that film would come to take in the twentieth century has resulted in a tendency in histories of celebrity to underemphasise the (specifically English) theatre's role in creating the modern celebrity. Richard Schickel, for example, contends that 'there was no such thing as celebrity prior to the beginning of the twentieth century'.⁹¹ Chris Rojek (2001) acknowledges there were early forms of celebrity but views celebrity as a 'phenomenon of mass-circulation newspapers, TV, radio and film'.⁹² Richard deCordova (1990) argued that the Vitagraph Girl (Florence Turner) and IMP's Florence Lawrence were the first stars of the film industry as they were the first film stars to have their names billed and have films publicised based on their names (April 1910 and March 1910 respectively).⁹³ Turner (2004) argues that although the origin of celebrity cannot be pinned to just one particular moment, the 'clearest location at which we might start to chart its various histories [...] seems to be the American motion picture industry at the beginning of the twentieth century', which modern scholarship (including this thesis) is proving to be incorrect.⁹⁴

Some studies (such as Dyer and Turner) acknowledge that the theatre industry's star system preceded the film industry's, but few engage with the celebrity culture produced by the theatre industry in the pre-cinema era.⁹⁵ Marshall acknowledges the film industry's debt to the theatre industry for its star system.⁹⁶ However, in asserting that the introduction of the close-up shot in cinema was an important development in the creation of the star, Marshall argues,

In opposition to the codes of drama, in which the entire scene and stage are visible, the camera allowed for the framing of actors' faces. Facial expression, with all its subtleties

⁹¹ *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity in America* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1985 repr. 2000), p. 23.

⁹² *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001 repr 2004), p. 16.

⁹³ *Picture Personalities: the Emergence of the Star System in America* (Illinois: UP, 1990 repr. 2001), p. 2; p. 69. Andrew Shail (2019) corrects deCordova's assumption by proving that there were film stars, such as Max Linder, in Europe from at least September 1909.

⁹⁴ *Understanding Celebrity* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001), p. 12.

⁹⁵ Dyer, p. 20; Turner, p. 12. Braudy (1986) argued that the theatre was a central component in the democratisation of fame and the movement towards individualism since the sixteenth century. He claimed that Max Beerbohm's dramatic criticism and personality sketches of performers in the late nineteenth century contributed to the creation of the theatrical star system that later influenced film stardom (p. 524). The main limitation of Braudy's text is its wide scope. As a result, aspects of celebrity particular to a historical period are either absent or conflated into a wider image of events.

⁹⁶ p. 80.

and intimacies, became a sign of the distinctive quality of the film over theater. Simultaneously, the close-up imbricated the actor more fully into the meaning of the drama. The close-up focused on the personal in a way that the stage had never done.⁹⁷

The limitation of this argument is that it does not account for the extra-theatrical materials that compose a theatre actor's profile. This thesis demonstrates that while Forbes-Robertson was not the object of cinematic close-ups, he was photographed extensively and these images were reproduced on postcards, in newspapers, on posters, on advertisements, and cigarette cards. Programmes featuring close-up photographs of the actor were sometimes available at theatre performances, which created an illusion of intimacy. During Forbes-Robertson's Farewell Tour, for instance, the ticket included a souvenir booklet featuring photographs (mostly medium-close-up shots) of Forbes-Robertson, sometimes in role and sometimes out of costume. Reproductions of photographs were particularly important to the creation of the public image of Forbes-Robertson emphasising a particular form of aesthetic beauty (discussed in Chapter 1). Therefore, Marshall's argument that the stage did not allow a focus on the personal fails to recognise the breadth of means through which a celebrity is visible to their audience.

0.4.4 *Celebrity Politics*

The assumption that the story of celebrity begins with film (Hollywood) stars with negative associations of consumer culture resulted in early celebrity (or culture) scholars drawing inaccurate conclusions on the power and scope of celebrity. Leo Lowenthal (1944) and C. Wright Mills (1956) viewed celebrity as vacuous and superficial, and Boorstin argued that that a celebrity's 'qualities—or rather his lack of qualities—illustrate our peculiar problems. He is neither good nor bad, great nor petty. [...] He has been fabricated on purpose to satisfy our exaggerated expectations of human greatness'.⁹⁸ In 1972, Francesco Alberoni asserted that the '*institutional power [of celebrities] is very limited or non-existent, but [their] doings and way of life arouse a considerable [...] degree of interest*' and ascribed celebrities as a 'powerless elite' with little significant influence in society.⁹⁹ Forbes-Robertson's celebrity did prove to be useful for selling commodities in a consumer marketplace but, this thesis proves, he simultaneously

⁹⁷ p. 13.

⁹⁸ p. 71.

⁹⁹ 'The Powerless "Elite": Theory and Sociological Research on the Phenomenon of the Stars', in *Sociology of Mass Communications*, ed. by Denis McQuail (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972 repr. 1976), pp 75-98, p. 75. (Italics in the original).

possessed social and political authority. The celebrity may be a fabricated commodity but it does not follow that s/he is devoid of meaning, as academics now view celebrities as forms of subjectivity that are the result of society's selection of desirable traits and are, therefore, the embodiments of mass society's ideologies. Celebrities are a component of modern capitalism, which bestows individuality to the collective through product and political consumption, fulfilling a powerful social function. Scholars have demonstrated that celebrities have displaced religious icons (Rojek 2001), or that celebrities provide comfort, validation, and integration for their fans (Turner 2004) in forms of para-social interaction.

Modern scholarship now explores these roles of celebrity in political arenas. However, there is still a tendency to assume that celebrity involvement in public life is a twentieth-century phenomenon – a result of radio and television (Darrell M. West and John Orman (2003)) with an emphasis on relations between Hollywood and politicians (Mark Wheeler (2006)) that proliferated in the Digital Age (A. Trevor Thrall (2008)).¹⁰⁰ Asteris Huliaras and Nikolaos Tzifakis (2011) locate the origins of the celebrity activism of the twenty-first century to the policies of the United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan (1938-2018, Secretary General 1997-2006) who encouraged extensive use of celebrities as goodwill ambassadors to advance UN missions.¹⁰¹ However, others have proven that there is a long historical association of celebrities with political activity. Andrew Cooper (2008) instances US Founding Father Benjamin Franklin (1706-1790) and military strategist T. E. Lawrence (1888-1935) as individuals who used celebrity for diplomatic purposes.¹⁰² Street (2011) describes how the celebrated poets John Milton (1608-1674), John Dryden (1631-1700), and Andrew Marvell (1621-1678) used their status to contribute to political arguments during the English Civil War (1642–1651).¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ *Celebrity Politics* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2003), pp. 7-8; *Hollywood Politics and Society* (London: BFI, 2006), p. 4 and p. 139; A. Trevor Thrall and others, 'Star Power: Celebrity Advocacy and the Evolution of the Public Sphere', *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 13.4 (June 2008), 362-385 <[10.1177/1940161208319098](https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161208319098)> [accessed 22 March 2017], pp. 363-365.

¹⁰¹ 'Bringing the Individuals Back In? Celebrities as Transnational Activists', in *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* ed. by Liza Tsaliki and others (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011), pp. 27-44, p. 35.

¹⁰² *Celebrity Diplomacy*, (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2008), p. 1. For a similar argument see also West and Orman, pp. 7-8, and Mark Wheeler, *Celebrity Politics: Image and Identity in Contemporary Political Communications* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), pp. 36-37.

¹⁰³ *Mass Media, Politics & Democracy 2nd Edition* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 250.

Similarly, Robert van Krieken (2012) demonstrates that, during the British Election of 1784 in which the Whig Charles Fox (1749-1806) ran against the Tory William Pitt (1759-1806), popular aristocratic women provided a political function as they attracted crowds to political meetings and engaged them in political discussion.¹⁰⁴ Michael, Cynthia, and Rachel Stohl (2011) indicate early instances of celebrity activism in the artworks of JMW Turner (1775-1851) and William Blake (1757-1827) used for anti-slavery campaigns, and the campaign work of Mark Twain (1835-1910) against imperialism.¹⁰⁵

These examples demonstrate that celebrities from multiple disciplines can become politicised. Stohl *et al* argue

that although different eras have different types of artists as major celebrities, it is the potential influence of prominence itself that makes celebrities attractive as advocates, rather than the particular medium in which they operate.¹⁰⁶

However, the medium of entertainment in which the celebrity works impacts on the conveyance of the political message to the public.¹⁰⁷ Celebrities of the theatre belong to an industry with a long history of political performances which have stimulated change and provoked (or quelled) violent riots. For instance, supporters of Robert Devereux, 2nd Earl of Essex, commissioned a staging of Shakespeare's *Richard II* at the Globe Theatre on the eve of their rebellion against Queen Elizabeth I on 7 February 1601. The likely intention was for the audience to draw parallels between the weak and feminine kingship of Richard II and Queen Elizabeth to provoke the rebellion. In this instance it failed to inspire the desired reaction, but the point is that the supporters believed the theatre could motivate an audience. In his exploration of what it is about the theatre that makes it politically inflammatory, Sean McEvoy (2016) argues that the concrete performances happening in real time are unrepeatable and can therefore transfer emotions to real life.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁴ *Celebrity Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), p. 103, Kindle ebook.

¹⁰⁵ 'Linking Small Arms, Child Soldiers, NGOs and Celebrity Activism: Nicolas Cage and the *Lord of War*', in *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* ed. by Liza Tsaliki and others, (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011), pp. 213-229, p. 216.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁷ Street, (2011), p. 246.

¹⁰⁸ *Theatrical Unrest: Ten Riots in the History of the Stage, 1601-2004* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 2.

Politicised theatre celebrities at the turn of the twentieth century relied on this transferral of sentiment to inspire and motivate audiences. As an activist/advocate/diplomat, Forbes-Robertson could not be disassociated from his medium and he used his plays and fictional characters as tools in aiding his political messages. As will be evidenced, *Passing* – a modern morality play – was particularly useful as a fundraiser as it inspired the audience to be generous and charitable. Not only was a celebrity actor capable of politically sensitive performance on stage but the performative quality of celebrity was instrumental to the operation of committees and organisations. Catherine Hindson (2016) illustrates that the female theatre celebrities who were involved in charitable exploits between 1880 and 1920 relied heavily on their theatrical training and showcasing their stage skills for their charitable work, but that their fund-raising events were not an extension of their stage performance but a separate practice.¹⁰⁹ The discussion of Forbes-Robertson’s involvement in projects during the War to benefit theatre bodies and members of the theatre industry in Chapter 4 particularly highlights how an actor could be useful to a cause on and off stage.

0.4.5 Audiences and Publics

Forbes-Robertson’s theatre audiences and celebrity public were the consumers of his celebrity and had an active role in the creation of the Forbes-Robertson brand and his theatrical decisions.

Simon Morgan (2011) criticises the lack of attention scholars pay to celebrity consumers:

we have said relatively little about those consumers themselves, the ‘audience’ for the celebrity product, and the nature of the relationships they attempted to establish (either personally or through the consumption of items bearing their likeness or information about them) with famous individuals. How did they respond to such figures, and what meaning (if any) did they have in their lives?¹¹⁰

Morgan seeks to ascertain the meaning that celebrities bring to their fans and describes the attempts of fans to forge a relationship with the celebrity through the giving of gifts. Likewise, Susan Bennett (1997) points out that an audience is important to a theatre production as it is ‘involved in a reciprocal relationship which can change the quality and success of a

¹⁰⁹*London’s West End Actresses and the Origins of Celebrity Charity, 1880-1920* (Iowa: UP, 2016), p. 12.

¹¹⁰ ‘Celebrity: Academic ‘Pseudo-Event’ or a Useful Concept for Historians?’, *Celebrity, Cultural and Social History*, 8:1, (2011), 95-114, DOI: 10.2752/147800411X12858412044474, pp. 106-107.

performance'.¹¹¹ This thesis examines how Forbes-Robertson's audience and public informed on his celebrity; for example, his audience gave negative reviews when he performed in roles that deviated from the public persona he had adopted.

Forbes-Robertson's theatre audience had a relationship with its performers that was in transition. Cheryl Wanko, exploring the concept of fandom and the role of the audience in theatres, argues that a fan, in its modern usage, could not exist while there was a system of patronage in place. In a patronage system – as existed in the eighteenth-century – the audience inherited the role of the aristocratic patron who pays a performer for their services, as opposed to in a commodity marketplace where a commodity is created and the consumer chooses whether or not to purchase it. In a patronage relationship the audience felt a sense of ownership over the performance and would express their disapproval when dissatisfied.¹¹² Wanko evidences occasions when the performers offended their audience and were greeted with hostility as a result. Traces of this patronage relationship between audience and performer existed during Forbes-Robertson's stage career.

In 1880, Forbes-Robertson played Lord Glossmore in *Money* by Bulwer-Lytton with the Bancrofts as he accompanied them in their move from the Prince of Wales Theatre to the Haymarket. As part of their extensive refurbishments at the Haymarket, they converted the large pit into stalls and moved the 'pittites' to the second circle in the gallery. Bennett insists that when theatre managers replaced pits with stalls they were ensuring 'sedate behaviour' from the audience, although this was not the initial reaction to the changes.¹¹³ As Forbes-Robertson entered for the first scene on the opening night on 31 January he was met with a protest from the former frequenters of the pit at their new location in the auditorium.¹¹⁴ Bancroft argued that it was financially impossible to retain the pit, asserting, 'Gentlemen, a theatre is a place of business,' in response to which he was heckled further.¹¹⁵ The press was generally in favour of the slighted patrons. *Reynold's Newspaper* described the dissenters exhibiting 'a pleasurable

¹¹¹ *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception, 2nd edn* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 21.

¹¹² 'Patron or patronised?: fans' and the eighteenth-century English stage', in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture 1750-1850*, ed. by Tom Mole (Cambridge: UP, 2009), pp. 209-226, p. 211.

¹¹³ p. 3.

¹¹⁴ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 94.

¹¹⁵ 'Haymarket Theatre', *Morning Post*, 2 February 1880, p. 2.

sense of power' when they refused to listen to Bancroft's explanations for they had been 'defrauded of their rights'.¹¹⁶ *The Referee* argued that Bancroft, who was supposed to be a beacon of high dramatic art over commercial gain, had betrayed his followers:

Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft evidently intend their house to be a resort for the wealthy. As to the poorer worshippers of dramatic art, whose worship has been to true and sincere artists always best worth having, [...] the Haymarket Theatre is no longer for such draggletails as these. We regret this extremely; and if anything deepens our regret it is that such admirable acting [...] is to be wasted on people who can afford to be fashionable, on butterflies and brainless idiots who go to the play because it is the thing to do so, and who know nothing of the drama as it is so well and so thoroughly known to the good old band of Pittites.¹¹⁷

The *Morning Post* likened the change to 'a Parliament without a House of Commons' while *The Globe* acknowledged that it was the right of the manager to set the prices and arrange the seating as he or she chose.¹¹⁸

This episode, which Forbes-Robertson witnessed from the vantage of the stage, illustrates how the audience-performer relationship was in transition. These changes confirm Wanko's assertion that 'the move from aristocratic patronage to consumer marketplace is not direct, and is especially complex in the theatrical world'.¹¹⁹ In 1914, Forbes-Robertson described the contemporary theatrical manager as 'an entirely self-supporting servant of the public'.¹²⁰ He appears to have learnt from such experiences that he must (at least appear to) treat his audience as patrons and thus acknowledged the power it possessed.

However, a social space also comes with behaviour codes. 'Audiences have their obligations,' asserted *The Stage*, 'and Forbes-Robertson was not slow to remind them that unless they were prepared to pay attention and give themselves up to illusion there could be no play'.¹²¹ It reported that he had little patience for audiences interrupting performances. This 1953 assertion has foundation as *The St. James's Gazette* reported that he called members of the box 'to order' for talking during his performance of *The Light That Failed* at the Lyric in March 1903.¹²² He

¹¹⁶ 'Last Night's Theatricals', *Reynolds's Newspaper*, 1 February 1880, p. 1.

¹¹⁷ 'Haymarket—Saturday Night', *Referee*, 1 February 1880, p. 3.

¹¹⁸ 'Haymarket Theatre', *Morning Post*, 2 February 1880, p. 2 and 'The Pit at the Haymarket Theatre', *Globe*, 2 February 1880, p. 1.

¹¹⁹ p. 223.

¹²⁰ 'The Theatre of Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow', [...] p. 507.

¹²¹ 'Centenary', *Stage*, 15 January 1953, p.8.

¹²² 'Obiter Scripta', *St James's Gazette*, 2 April 1903, p. 5.

also did not tolerate audience members wearing large hats that obstructed views of the stage. His 1910 sketch of ladies' hats (Fig 0.1) satirises the fashion of the day's implicit suggestion that the ideal hat should be half the height of the lady. A 1903 programme for *The Light That Failed* (Fig 0.2) requests that ladies remove their hats. These reciprocal duties reveal that there were certain expectations of an audience in the creation of a successful enterprise.



Fig 0.1: Forbes-Robertson's sketch of women's hats (1910).¹²³

¹²³ BTC, M&M, (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO).

NEW THEATRE.
Proprietor CHARLES WYNDHAM.

MR. FORBES ROBERTSON'S SEASON.

ON MONDAY, APRIL 20, & EVERY EVENING at 8.30.
MATINEE, WEDNESDAY & SATURDAY, at 2.30.

THE LIGHT THAT FAILED
Adapted from RUDYARD KIPLING'S NOVEL by
GEORGE FLEMING.

<p>Dick Helder - Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON Gilbert Belling Torpenhow - Mr. AUBREY SMITH J. G. Fordham " Nilghat " - Mr. SYDNEY VALENTINE Leone Cassavetti - Mr. HERBERT DANSEY Morton Mackenzie - Mr. EAN MACDONALD James Vickery - Mr. LEON QUARTERMAINE G. B. Deenes - Mr. FRANK BICKLEY F. Cecil Vincent - Mr. CYRIL VERNON Phil Raynor - Mr. ARTHUR HARROLD Beeton - Mr. WILLIAM FARREN, jun. A Young Man - Mr. GEORGE M. GRAHAM Maisie - Miss GERTRUDE ELLIOTT Bessie Broke - Miss NINA BOUCICAULT The Red Haired Girl - Miss MARGARET HALSTAN Mrs. Haynes - Miss MINNIE GRIFFIN A Model - Miss AIMEE DEBURGH A French Bonne - Miss MARIANNE CALDWELL Binkie (A Fox Terrier) - By himself</p>	<p>Prologue—<i>War Correspondent's Tent on the outskirts of the Camp, Soudan</i> (J. Hatke) Act 1 ... <i>Maisie's Studio, Pomona House, W.</i> (W. T. Hemsley) Act 2 ... <i>Dick's Studio, Norfolk Street, Strand</i> (W. Hann) Act 3—<i>Scene 1 ... Garden of Maisie's Cottage at Vitry-sur-Marne</i> (W. Hann) <i>Scene 2 ... Dick's Studio</i> (W. Hann)</p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

INTERVALS.

Mr. Frederick Villiers, the War Artist Correspondent, has kindly superintended the arrangement of the Camp Scene in the Prologue.

There will be an Interval of 10 minutes between the Acts, and the Curtain will be lowered for 2 minutes between Scenes 1 and 2, Act III.

Costumiers—Madame Filkes, 7, Stafford Street, Dover Street, W.; B. J. Simmons & Co.; and Morris Angel. Hats by Valeska, Knightsbridge, Ferniquier—Clackson

This, the only authorized version of Mr. Kipling's book has been secured by Mr. Forbes Robertson for England and America, by arrangement with Miss Clea Netherlands.

PROGRAMME OF MUSIC.

OVERTURE from "Roy Blas" Mendelssohn
 HUNGARIAN DANSE from "Mors et Vitae" Gounod
 ZWARTSA "slavische Tanses" Brahms
 DANSE BIZAREE ("De Ballet le Diable 'maoureux") Riber
 Musical Director Mr. FREDK. ROSSE

Stage Manager } For Mr. FORBES ROBERTSON
 Acting Manager } ROBERTSON Mr. SHAD FROST

NOTICE.—The Management respectfully request ladies present at Matinees to kindly remove their hats, so as to afford those sitting behind them an uninterrupted view of the Stage.

Private Boxes, £1 11s. 6d. to £6 6s. Stalls, 10s.
 Family Circle, 1s. 6d. Gallery, 1s.
 Doors Open at 7.45. Commence at 8.30.
 BOX OFFICE (Mr. G. MILES) 10 THEATRE.

Acting Manager and Treasurer } (for CHARLES WYNDHAM) Mr. PERCY ELLIS

Extract from the Rules made by the Lord Chamberlain.
 (1). The name of the actual and responsible Manager of the Theatre must be printed on every Play Bill. (2). The Public can leave the Theatre at the end of the performance by all exit and entrance doors, which must open outwards. (3). The Public must be permitted to enter the Theatre at least once during every performance to ensure its being in proper working order. (4). Smoking is not permitted in the Auditorium. (5). All passages, passages and staircases must be kept free from chairs or any other obstructions, whether permanent or temporary.

Fig 0.2: Programme for *The Light That Failed* at New Theatre (1903). The Notice on the right reads: 'The management respectfully request ladies present at Matinees to kindly remove their hats, so as to afford those sitting behind them an uninterrupted view of the Stage'.¹²⁴

¹²⁴ BTC, M&M, (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO).

0.5 Approaching Celebrity

This study is divided into two parts. The first explores the ascent of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity and the second explores the commercial, social, and political functions of this celebrity. To achieve this, the thesis follows Forbes-Robertson's career in a loosely chronological order to illustrate how his celebrity profile gained momentum. A post-structuralist approach to celebrity, as outlined by Rojek, is useful for understanding the interaction of various forces towards the creation of a celebrity. As opposed to approaches pertaining to subjectivism (in which a celebrity is credited with inherent talent and personal uniqueness) or structuralism (that highlight the commercial and capitalist structures that created a constructed identity), post-structural tendencies restore agency to the individual, highlight the public's influence, and contextualise the forces of capitalism acting on the individual. Post-structuralism explores the interactions between these tenets and views the celebrity as a system of signs or symbols navigating selfhood in a consumer-based society.¹²⁵ The theories of hauntology (examined in Chapter 2) that explore ghosts of fictive and private identities, spaces, and performances also provide valuable insight into the creation of theatre celebrity by providing a further method of deconstructing layers of identity and meaning from the celebrity subject.

The meaning bound within a celebrity body can transfer to the public, but it can also transfer to a commodity or cause. This concept forms the second half of the study and draws on Grant McCracken's (1989) theory of meaning transfer. McCracken explains how celebrities endorse consumer products (whether overtly stating that they use a product, through recommending that others use it, or appearing alongside the product in an image) as properties associated with the endorser move initially to a product via advertisements, and then ultimately pass to the consumer. The consumer uses the attributes acquired from the celebrity to fashion their self and their ideas of the world.¹²⁶ McCracken claims that celebrities are successful as endorsers of a product when they are a credible source with a rendering of expertise or trustworthiness, or when they are an attractive source with an element of familiarity for the

¹²⁵ p. 29. The works of Richard Dyer (1979), Marshall (1997), and Graeme Turner (2004) have all been influential in the movement from structuralism to post-structuralism.

¹²⁶ 'Who Is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process', *Journal Of Consumer Research*, 16.3 (December 1989), 310-321 < <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2489512>> [accessed 2 April 2017], p. 310.

consumer.¹²⁷ Marshall argues that consumers are willing to assimilate this meaning because, in a world in which people belong to collectives and types, consumer culture is a means through which to create individuality within these collectives.¹²⁸ By selecting from a choice of products with differentiated meaning, the consumer adorns him/herself with desirable traits. Celebrity endorsement therefore transfers ideas about selfhood, individuality, and difference from the celebrity to the product. The celebrity body is, Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (2006) argue, ‘central to the way famous people are represented and consumed’, as ideologies concerning gender, race, class, and sexuality permeate through it.¹²⁹ Celebrity politics is a form of celebrity endorsement but rather than meaning transferring to a commodity it moves to a concept or cause. The second half of the study explores various moments and events where Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity identity was used to provide extra meaning in commercial and social situations.

0.6 Thesis Outline

Chapter 1, ‘Becoming a Celebrity’, pinpoints the characteristics that Forbes-Robertson attached to his brand and analyses the process that transformed his private self into a celebrity. His physical beauty resulted in him being cast in roles as a romantic lover and gossip that hinted at romantic attachments with his leading ladies (all the while avoiding scandal) had the potential to increase his popularity in such roles. He also continued to highlight his associations with the art world, reputable theatres, and established theatre stars in order to borrow their credibility to establish a reputation. Utilising new forms of journalism, he encouraged the projection of his celebrity persona in newspapers and an analysis of messages written on postcards featuring photographs of Forbes-Robertson indicates how his public interpreted his celebrity.

Chapter 2, ‘Hamlet – a Brand and a Ghost’, explores the importance of Forbes-Robertson’s Hamlet to his brand identity. The chapter uses the concept of hauntology to show that the public self of Forbes-Robertson was a composite of his mentors – Phelps, Irving, and Shaw – and that this is best manifested in his presentations of *Hamlet*. A deconstruction of the conditions surrounding the debut performance of *Hamlet*, the play during his Farewell Season, and the

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 311.

¹²⁸ p. 25.

¹²⁹ ‘Fame Body, Introduction’, in *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 119-205, p. 122.

making of the film adaptation of *Hamlet*, reveals how he manipulated the marketing of the performances so that the public would connect his name with other major players of Hamlet, including his mentor Irving, to remind the public of his theatrical heritage.

Chapter 3, 'Meaning Transfer: Celebrity Endorsement, Activism, Politics, and Diplomacy', starts by analysing promotional materials for consumer products endorsed by Forbes-Robertson, such as cigarette cards and soap, and explores the historical and social significance of these commodities being linked with Forbes-Robertson's name. Similarly, Forbes-Robertson's performance at the opening of The Grand Theatre in Calgary, Canada, on 5 February 1912, provided a celebrity endorsement of the building and the new town with its impetus towards a political and commercial relationship with the UK. The chapter applies the theory of 'meaning transfer' to demonstrate how Forbes-Robertson's celebrity qualities transferred to his consumer/audience/public via the product/place. Through the same process, celebrities could also endorse a social cause: Forbes-Robertson's support for women's suffrage furnished the cause with his qualities of respectability and decency while the same qualities proved useful fundraising assets for war charities. Finally, the chapter explores how, by virtue of his celebrity profile, he functioned in a diplomatic capacity to improve relations with the US.

Chapter 4, 'Celebrity Within the Theatre Profession', assesses how Forbes-Robertson used his celebrity profile to contribute to the continued professionalisation of the theatre. The theatre industry relied on celebrity and typecasting for profit. As an actor-manager Forbes-Robertson learnt that the public preferred him in roles that conformed to his persona (Hamlet, Romeo) rather than in those that deviated from it (Macbeth, Othello, and Shylock), and also that the public expected an actor-manager to be the centre of the play and not to allow other cast members to take the spotlight. This limited his artistic scope and he advocated for changes within the industry. Forbes-Robertson was an active spokesperson for theatrical bodies and committees and this chapter focuses on his involvement in two schemes that were controversial at the time: the National Theatre and the Academy of Dramatic Art. The controversy lay in the fact that these institutions were fronted by theatre celebrities, but these actor-managers had already worked to forge their own celebrity profiles and so had the least to gain from the movements.

Chapter 1. Becoming a Celebrity

‘At representations of legitimate drama the audience has its duty to itself and to the actor, quite as much as the actor has his evident duty to his audience.’

–Forbes-Robertson, 1925¹

1.1 Introduction: the Pillars of Celebrity Culture

On 9 September 1901, Forbes-Robertson and his company opened with *Hamlet* at the Theatre Royal Sheffield in the first of a six-night engagement in his first professional visit to Sheffield.² Local newspapers announcing the event declared it an ‘ENORMOUS ATTRACTION. SPECIAL ENGAGEMENT OF THE EMINENT ACTOR’, and claimed, ‘This is one of the most important theatrical engagements of the season. An actor of Mr. Forbes Robertson’s ability needs no introduction’.³ Similar claims were made in the *Sheffield Independent* and *Evening Telegraph*.⁴ Sheffield theatregoers knew of Forbes-Robertson’s reputation before they saw him on stage.

During the engagement, the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* printed a series of letters originating from ‘M.A.S’, a member of the audience at Forbes-Robertson’s performance of *Hamlet* on 12 September:

I confess to a feeling of disappointment that a first-class company like this one should be guilty of an inconsistency to which the theatrical profession is too much dictated. I mean the raising of the curtain at the end of a scene in response to the applause of the audience, when the principal actors in it are discovered standing to receive it. When the curtain descended last night on the closing scene of Act IV. depicting heart-broken Laertes kneeling beside his dead sister’s body, I think there was hardly a dry eye in the theatre. It came somewhat in the nature of a shock therefore when the curtain rose immediately disclosing the actors (including the dead Ophelia, looking very much alive and quite sane) in orthodox attitudes bowing to the audience. The whole scene is calculated to make one forgetful of everything but the tragedy before one’s eyes, and in the sudden return to everyday life which the rising of the curtain revealed one felt as ready to laugh as one had felt ready to cry.⁵

¹ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 201.

² His other plays included *The Sacrament of Judas*, *For the Crown*, and *Othello*.

³ ‘Public Notices’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 27 August 1901, p. 1; and ‘City and County’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 31 August 1901, p. 5.

⁴ ‘Sheffield Local News’, *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 7 September 1901, p. 10; and ‘Sheffield Notes & Jottings’, *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 7 September 1901, p. 3.

⁵ M.A.S., ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 16 September 1901, p. 7.

Another member of the audience, 'Thespis', followed the example and complained of the 'insane practice of resuscitating characters when a "curtain" is demanded by the audience'.⁶ The theatregoers found that the return of the actor interrupted the fictive performance, and they preferred to forget 'everyday life' and retain the illusion that the bodies on stage belonged to the characters being enacted. The crux of the debate was how to silence the celebrity selves in order to maintain the pretence that the stage is life and the audience is witness to real events.

In response to their complaints came a reply from the actor Arthur Holmes Gore (1871-1915), who explained,

as far as the artist is concerned, the tension and stress of his acting are relaxed, and the sense of personation leaves him with the dropping of the curtain, and any link with the personality of his characterisation that may remain is snapped by the spontaneous applause of the audience, 'in response' to which the curtain is raised.⁷

For Gore, then, the dropping of a curtain was a trigger to adopt a different self. He continued to question why Thespis found this practice so unusual and offensive:

'Thespis' speaks of the insane practice of resuscitating characters. Does 'Thespis' never buy a programme? When he was a 'spectator of M. Forbes Robertson's performance' did he go to see Forbes Robertson as Hamlet, or Shakespeare's Hamlet? Does 'Thespis' go to every representation of Hamlet in Sheffield, or does he wait for the London 'stars' to come round? If 'Thespis' is sufficiently human to care to know who is representing the characters he sees, if he knows actors' names, and the parts they play, he is as guilty as the stage manager of 'resuscitating the characters.'⁸

Gore's assertion is that a London 'star' brought with them an expectation created by his/her celebrity, and even the act of purchasing a programme deconstructs the performance and acknowledges its manufactured identity.

Forming part of his reply to Gore, Thespis wrote,

I carefully study [the programme] at my own fireside after the performance, and mark for future reference the name of any unknown actor with whom I am favourably impressed. In this connection I have many old programmes with names so marked of players who have since risen to eminence. In many cases of admitted ability, the actor was better when making his reputation than when he had become famous. The reason is obvious. Actors rarely achieve distinction till middle age, and often when their powers are declining. [...] With men like Henry Irving and Forbes Robertson, whose every gesture and position are

⁶ 'Letters to the Editor', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 18 September 1901, p. 3.

⁷ 'Letters to the Editor', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 23 September 1901, p. 9.

⁸ *Ibid.*

carefully studied to secure the best effect, it seems a pity that anything should occur to mar the performance.⁹

Thespis's claim to study the names on his programme illustrates how a performer's name creates an afterlife for the role. Thespis does not assert how s/he makes the distinction between someone whose acting is favourable and someone who appears favourable in a particular role. An explanation as to why s/he felt that performers still establishing their careers often performed better than they did later in life could simply be because there was no expectation or typecasting in the mind of the audience. This exchange of opinions in the newspaper is revealing about the nature of celebrity culture during Forbes-Robertson's career. The 'Letters to the Editor' section is a site where a performance and performers are analysed and negotiated. The newspaper was therefore an important branch of industry and a means for the likes of M.A.S. and Thespis, as audience members, to shape the reception of a performance or an individual. As Gore indicates, there are a number of identities that Thespis witnessed on stage: Forbes-Robertson, Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet, and Shakespeare's Hamlet.

Prior to the performances witnessed by members of the public, Forbes-Robertson had already gone through the processes of establishing a recognisable identity. The diagram below (Fig 1.1) shows how Forbes-Robertson's celebrity developed and disseminated. The process started with matching an aspect of his personal subjectivity (such as a physical trait) to a stage role. As he took on more similar roles he became typecast and his name became linked with the type in the media. The public internalise and extend the association and the celebrity brand expands. This chapter deconstructs this celebrity-making process using the concept that it is the interaction of an individual, the media, and the public that creates celebrity. First it looks at the individual and how inherent traits of Forbes-Robertson's private self attached to his other selves and explores the economies of reputation created by romantic engagements (real or constructed). Secondly, it considers his encounters with the press (particularly in the 1890s), and finally it inspects ephemera (specifically postcards) that provide glimpses into private exchanges between members of his public about his celebrity persona. This final section provides evidence proving the post-structuralist theory that consumers of celebrity played an active role in the construction of celebrity.

⁹ 'Letters to the Editor', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 24 September 1901, p. 3.

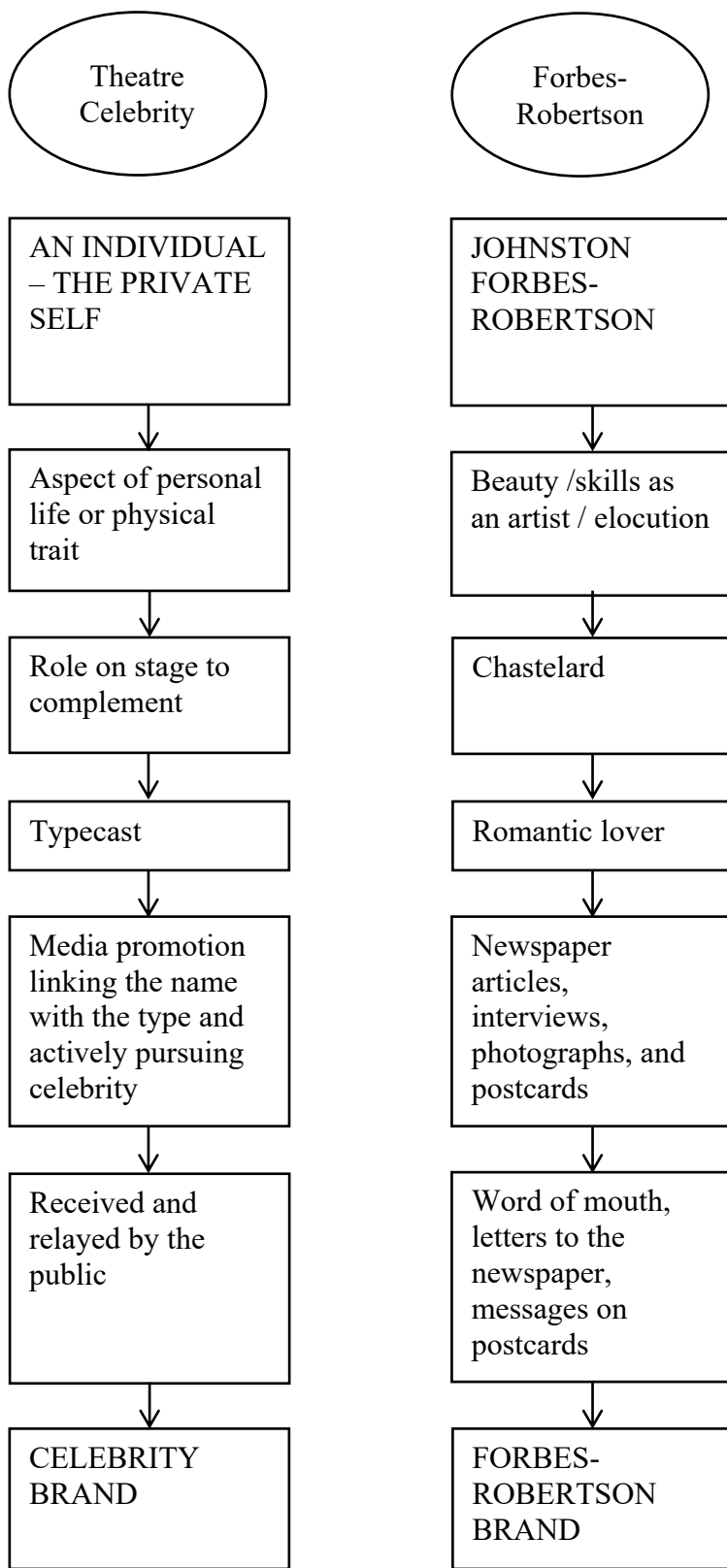


Fig 1.1: Forbes-Robertson's Theatre Celebrity

1.2 An Individual

This section considers the first three stages from the diagram in Fig 1.1 showing the evolution of Forbes-Robertson's private self into a public persona associated with a type of fictional role to demonstrate the process of creating a theatre celebrity. He founded his public image on his physical gifts – his good looks and his artistic abilities – and used his associations with the actresses he played alongside to build on his profile as an on-stage romantic lover.

1.2.1 *Physical Gifts: Beauty and Aestheticism*

After Forbes-Robertson's death in 1937, a newspaper obituary in *The Stage* recounted his life and asserted that the 'physical gifts' that made Forbes-Robertson suited for the theatre were 'his fine presence, his distinction of countenance, his rich voice, with a bell-like undertone, and his charm and strength of personality'.¹⁰ In 1950, Hesketh Pearson, who entered the acting profession just as Forbes-Robertson was leaving it and had seen him perform, insisted that Forbes-Robertson 'had been blessed with every possible quality for success as an actor: classical features, an engaging manner, a natural elegance of speech and movement, and a rich melodious voice with the tone of an organ'.¹¹ In 1914, an American journalist observed that a performer's physical traits 'are a considerable source of the impression he creates. In the case of Forbes-Robertson, they are profoundly important. His presence brings with it distinction and refinement. It suggests a world of chivalrous passion and romantic ideals'.¹² The physical beauty of Forbes-Robertson was central to his celebrity profile and journalists, critics, fellow performers, and his public alike were unanimous in admiration of his physical appearance and comportment.

This physical beauty of the man preceded the celebrity. According to Quinn, in the fashioning of celebrity there needs to be 'something about the personal life of the performer, to cast that life in the mould of celebrity'.¹³ That is, an element of the private self appears in the celebrity persona. Before the celebrity Forbes-Robertson, there was a man Forbes-Robertson with

¹⁰ 'Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Aristocrat of the Theatre', *Stage*, 11 November 1937.

¹¹ Pearson, p. I.

¹² 'The Farewell of the Foremost: Forbes-Robertson's Leave-Taking', *Boston Evening Transcript*, 24 January 1914, p. 4.

¹³ Michael L. Quinn, 'Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting', *NTQ*, 6, (1990), doi-10.1017/S0266464X0000422X, pp 154-161, p. 154.

an independent agency and, in this case, the private self also happened to be a talented artist. Forbes-Robertson's beauty had very specific connotations that rested on his adherence to a form of beauty based upon the principles of the contemporary art movements. The following obituary notice demonstrates how beauty and art mingled in the idea of Forbes-Robertson:

The quality of Sir Johnston's acting was, first and last, beauty. It was not powerfully emotional acting; it was not subtly intellectual acting. It was in all ways beautiful. From childhood to youth he had lived in an atmosphere of beauty in his father's house, where Rossetti, Swinburne, Whistler, and many another artist and poet were habitués. His Charterhouse was the beautiful old Charterhouse in London, and in France he lived in surroundings of beauty, physical and spiritual. Beauty he himself had throughout his life. He is the young Eros in Rossetti's 'Dante's Dream'; and he preserved to old age the beauty and dignity of his head, face, and bearing. The graciousness of his stage personality, the sweetness of his imagination – above all, perhaps, the matchless beauty of the 'violin cello voice,' upon which he so exquisitely played, combined to make him an actor of a peculiar and irresistible appeal. His Hamlet was all grace and beauty; so was his memorable Buckingham; and beauty, as if of music, filled up all that might be lacking in other Shakespearian performances.¹⁴

The writer encapsulates the physical image that emanated from the celebrity but uses the word 'beauty' to talk about the private self of Forbes-Robertson (his childhood, his facial features, and figure), his stage persona ('stage personality'), and his fictive embodiments (Hamlet and Buckingham), which illustrates how the realms of selfhood merge. This was the result of a deliberate mediation of his identity throughout his career.

In interviews and publicity materials, Forbes-Robertson encouraged discussion of his artistic background and, in particular, his training at the Royal Academy and his associations with prominent and avant-garde artists. In June 1884, a gallery in Bond-street exhibited his painting of the church scene in *Much Ado About Nothing* (commissioned by Irving). *The Era* reported that it 'attracted much attention and admiration from theatrical visitors, who will, no doubt, be glad to know that engravings of this interesting work are now published by the above firm'.¹⁵ This suggests that theatregoers were attracted to the gallery because of the theatrical theme of the piece. In 1894, *The Sketch* used the Forbes-Robertson family as an example to claim that artistic temperament is hereditary: 'Sometimes [artistic temperament] takes the same form: more often, perhaps, it displays itself in different ways—in art, in literature, or on the stage. The Forbes-

¹⁴ Newspaper Cutting in M&M, BTC (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO).

¹⁵ 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 21 June 1884, p. 8.

Robertsons combine all these manifestations'.¹⁶ Ahead of the opening of Forbes-Robertson and Campbell's *Romeo and Juliet* at the Lyceum the following year, the *Penny Illustrated Paper* contended that, as the play was the creation of 'an earnest and clever young actor who is also a talented painter, [it] is bound to be a marvel of artistic beauty' and reminded readers that 'Mr. Robertson has never quite abandoned the brush'.¹⁷ Similarly, *The Era* published an interview in 1899 that hailed Forbes-Robertson as a 'brilliant conversationalist [...] with a full grasp of the subjects that interest mankind, and particularly of artistic subjects'.¹⁸ Throughout these articles ran discussions of his association with the Pre-Raphaelite circles, his early training at the Royal Academy, and lists of his famous paintings.

Even after almost thirty years on the stage, Forbes-Robertson's beginnings in art were still integral to his persona. An article in *The Sketch* (1903) discusses him as an actor-artist and features a full-length photograph of him at an easel painting Elliott (Fig 1.2). It claims, 'Though Mr. Forbes-Robertson ranks among the elect of serious actors, he belongs to what might be called the Artistic Brotherhood of the stage'.¹⁹ In 1913, even with his celebrity status compounded, the press continued to highlight his connections to the art world:

Probably no one on the English-speaking stage has had a greater and broader-minded association with the famous men, and especially the most distinguished painters, poets, and litterateurs, of yesterday and to-day than Forbes-Robertson. He early became associated with Rossetti, [Edward] Burne-Jones [1833-1898], and the rest of that famous Victorian coterie.²⁰

This continued after his retirement, for instance when during a toast he gave in 1922 at the London Press Club, Forbes-Robertson reminded his audience, 'I have long been in intimate acquaintance with nearly all the great figures in those four arts [literature, drama, painting, and music]' and told his listeners of his friendships with prominent artists.²¹ At the time of Forbes-Robertson's centenary of his birth in 1953, Frances Collingwood recalled that Forbes-Robertson 'had the voice of an angel and the presence of a god; while in the one hand he held a mask, and with the other clasped a paint-brush'.²² An article in the *Edmonton Journal* in Canada, on the

¹⁶ 'Theatrical Families', *Sketch*, 22 August 1894, pp. 16-17.

¹⁷ 'Facts and Faces', *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 28 September 1895, p. 3.

¹⁸ 'A Chat with Forbes-Robertson', *Era*, 4 November 1899, p. 13.

¹⁹ 'Two Actor-Artists', *Sketch*, 25 March 1903, p. 369.

²⁰ Quisquis, 'City Chat', *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 28 January 1913, p. 8.

²¹ 'An Actor on the Four Arts', *Gloucester Journal*, 4 November 1922, p. 5.

²² 'Forbes-Robertson Centenary', *Stage*, 15 January 1953, p. 10.

subject of Forbes-Robertson's background in art, also details that he was 'the chum of Gabriel Dante Rossetti and [William] Holman Hunt [1827-1910]' and tells of the *Much Ado About Nothing* painting for Irving.²³ This indicates that his association with the art world was a discussion-point during his career, and it travelled geographically.

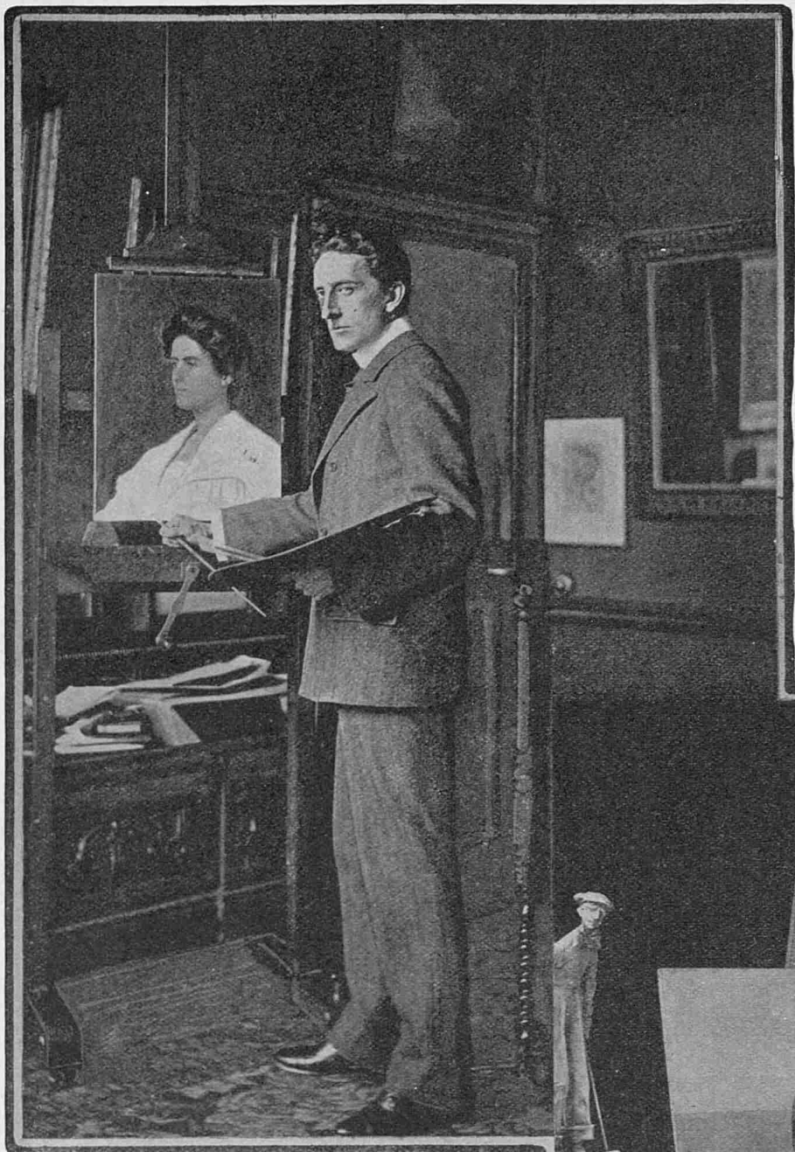


Fig 1.2: Photograph in *The Sketch* of Forbes-Robertson painting a portrait of Elliott (1903).²⁴

The Forbes-Robertson family hosted gatherings of painters, writers, poets and philosophers including members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood and the Aestheticism movements that

²³ 'Necessity Making of Great Thespian', *Edmonton Journal*, 8 February 1912, p. 6.

²⁴ 'Two Actor-Artists', *Sketch*, 25 March 1903, p. 369.

shook the Victorian art sphere in the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁵ The founding members of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (Rossetti, John Everett Millais [1829-1896], and Hunt) influenced the art scene after its formation in 1848.²⁶ Although the styles of paintings produced by the Brotherhood varied greatly, their essential goal was to revolutionise art by rejecting the style of the Royal Academy (which copied the Renaissance style of Raphael) and, instead, create original paintings that used vibrant colours, paid attention to details, and looked to nature or real life for inspiration.²⁷ For example, Millais's *Christ in the House of His Parents* (1849-1850) was based on a real carpenter's shop on Oxford Street – the sheep's heads modeled on those found in a butcher's shop and the bodies of the people were those of a real carpenter and his family (although the carpenter's head was a portrait of Millais's father).²⁸ Following the exhibition of the painting in the Royal Academy, *The Times* pronounced it 'revolting' and *The Bucks Herald* claimed the painting was 'in very bad taste, and in our opinion wretchedly executed'.²⁹ *The Morning Chronicle* chastised Millais for being 'the most obtrusive sinner against all rules and laws of taste and art', and condemned the painting as 'utterly indefensible on any pre-text whatsoever, [... and] the most daring, glaring and offensive instance' of Pre-Raphaelite art.³⁰

The Pre-Raphaelite painters differed in their styles but they compiled a commentary of their opinions on the state of English art in a magazine they titled *Germ*, published from January to April 1850, which was met with derision by the popular press. The scorn was such that the market for their paintings disappeared until the widely respected John Ruskin (1819-1900) wrote

²⁵ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 43. This thesis follows the advice of Elizabeth Prettejohn who cautions against referring to the aesthetic developments in the Victorian art scene as the 'Aesthetic Movement' as there was no defining movement as such, and the 'Aesthetic Movement' more frequently refers to popular trends and changes in fashion than art and sculpture, ('Introduction', in *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, ed. by Elizabeth Prettejohn (Manchester: UP, 1999), pp 1-16, p. 4).

²⁶ They would later be joined by James Collinson, Thomas Woolner, William Michael Rossetti, and Frederic George Stephens.

²⁷ Robert de la Sizeranne, *The Pre-Raphaelites* (New York: Parkstone International, 2014), p. 78, Kindle E-book.

²⁸ *Christ in the House of His Parents ('The Carpenter's Shop')*, 1850, oil paint on canvas, 86.4 × 139.7cm, Tate, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-christ-in-the-house-of-his-parents-the-carpenters-shop-n03584> [accessed 1 January 2017].

²⁹ 'The Exhibition of the Royal Academy', *Times*, 9 May 1850, p. 5; and 'Our London Gossip', *Bucks Herald*, 18 May 1850, p. 6.

³⁰ 'Exhibition of the Royal Academy,' *Morning Chronicle*, 4 May 1850, p. 5.

to *The Times* in defense of the artists.³¹ His arguments turned popular opinion and the artists went on to exhibit and sell paintings. Nonetheless, by 1853 the Brotherhood lost cohesion, particularly when Millais became an Associate Member of the Royal Academy – the very institution they had striven to oppose.

The disbanding of the Brotherhood did not mean that their influence dissolved; it branched out into new strands of experimental art such as Aestheticism. The scope of Aestheticism is as difficult to define as the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood, but both are concerned with a desire to present ‘art for art’s sake’. The main difference between Aestheticism and the work of the Pre-Raphaelites was that Aestheticism acknowledged art’s difference from ‘real life’, which allowed a greater emphasis on beauty.³² The *Oxford Dictionary of Art* defines Aestheticism as a ‘doctrine that art is self-sufficient and need serve no ulterior purpose, whether moral, social, political, or religious’.³³ These ideological stances were not limited to painting; in literature, Swinburne and Oscar Wilde (1854-1900) were advocates of ‘art for art’s sake’ with Wilde also a proponent of Aestheticism in fashion, while William Morris (1834-1896) famously championed beauty in the design of mundane everyday items. Morris led the revolutionary movement in arts and crafts that sought to bring beauty to the lives of all, regardless of wealth.

Forbes-Robertson was acquainted with these figureheads of the Aesthetic art scene and their emphasis on beauty. Their influence is evident in his public identity that emphasised the concept of aestheticist beauty. The association of alternative artistic principles with Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity was observed by Lawrence Eilenberg who, in an unpublished PhD thesis (1975), claimed that ‘Forbes-Robertson’s appearance was the ideal of the aesthetic movement – tall, lean, with classical features and the curly locks so requisite to the notion of masculine beauty articulated by the Pre-Raphaelites’.³⁴ This observation is given credence by the fact that Rossetti asked Forbes-Robertson to pose as Eros in his painting, *Dante’s Dream* (1871-1881) (the

³¹ His letters were dated 7 May 1851 and 26 May 1851 but published on the 13th and 30th respectively.

³² Prettejohn, p. 2.

³³ *Oxford Dictionary of Art, Third Ed*, ed. by Ian Chilvers (Oxford: UP, 2004), p. 10.

³⁴ ‘Johnston Forbes-Robertson: Actor-Manager A Study of His Theatrical Style’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University. May 1975), p. 38.

character in red in Fig 1.3).³⁵ Forbes-Robertson recalled the embarrassment he endured while posing but also emphasises Rossetti's pre-occupation with beauty: '[a]t the first sitting I remember [Rossetti] said, "I am sorry, my dear Johnston, there is no beautiful creature for you to kiss."' He also remembered that in order to get the pose right his seventeen year-old self 'had to lean over a cushion on a couch'.³⁶ This is exemplary of the work of the Pre-Raphaelites and Aestheticists painting real bodies in poses suggestive of motion, as Millais had done in *Christ in the House of His Parents*. Aestheticists placed an emphasis on the beauty of the human figure and its ability to create new shapes and angles. The five figures in *Dante's Dream*, for instance, are arranged non-uniformly (standing, leaning, looking up, gazing down), which was, according to Robert de la Sizeranne (2014), one of the chief characteristics in the work of the Pre-Raphaelites.³⁷ Even in his youth, therefore, life-model work meant that Forbes-Robertson was learning how to use his body in a novel way to create an artistic impression, as he would learn to do on stage.



Fig 1.3: Forbes-Robertson posing as Eros in Rossetti's *Dante's Dream* (c. 1869-1871).³⁸

³⁵ *Dante's Dream* was a painting that resulted from Rossetti's obsession with the life of Dante Alighieri. This particular work was inspired by Dante's poem *La Vita Nuova* wherein he dreams of being guided to his love Beatrice on her deathbed. Eros holds Dante's hand to lead him to Beatrice and leans in to kiss her.

³⁶ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 46-47.

³⁷ p. 78.

³⁸ *Dante's Dream at the Time of the Death of Beatrice*, c. 1869-1871, oil paint on canvas, 216 × 312.4 cm, National Museums Liverpool (Walker Art Gallery)

Forbes-Robertson recorded his experience as a model for Rossetti in his autobiography in which he unabashedly name-drops the literary and artistic influences with whom he came into contact. He maintained close friendships with many pioneers of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood (he records staying at the home of Millais and being pall-bearer at Hunt's funeral) and recalled performing Shakespeare plays as a teenager with his brothers, sisters, and friends before '[s]everal literary and artistic lights'.³⁹ He used the lexicon of the Aestheticists to describe his friends and acquaintances, whom he credits with being the masterminds behind the renaissance in Victorian art: 'Swinburne's nose was what is called Roman,' he describes, 'his chin disappeared into his neck, indeed the profile was very weak, but the full face had great beauty, those clear blue eyes, the bluest I ever saw'.⁴⁰ Of Whistler he observed '[t]he stiff aigrette of grey hair, so familiar in later days, was then a soft wavy lock, lying very conspicuously, but flowing with the rest of his then black curly hair'.⁴¹ His use of these poetic descriptions betrays an appreciation of beauty and, in highlighting his association with the Aestheticists and assimilating their language, he brought value to his celebrity image by highlighting a sense of inclusion within their group and projecting their image onto his own so that his meaning was easily identifiable which allowed his celebrity to springboard off theirs. That is not to say that these relationships were necessarily invented; even authentic relationships can act as signifiers of meaning. The beauty that surrounded Forbes-Robertson in his looks, his artwork, and acquaintances, signified an appreciation of aesthetics.

When Forbes-Robertson first took to the stage before he established his celebrity, his natural assets secured him roles, and, in particular, because of his good looks he was cast in roles of lovers. In the first year on stage (1874) he played: Chastelard - the lover of Mary Queen of Scots, James Annesley – lover of Philippa Chester (Ellen Terry) in Charles Reade's *The Wandering Heir*, Lysander – lover of Helena in *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Fenton – a gentleman who secretly marries Anne in *Merry Wives of Windsor*. By 1880, when Wilson Barrett (1846-1904) engaged him as Modjeska's leading man, his celebrity brand began to formulate grounded in the romantic lover type.

<http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/exhibitions/rossetti/works/latework/dantesdream.aspx> [accessed 21 October 2014].

³⁹ p. 43.

⁴⁰ pp. 85-87; p. 43.

⁴¹ p. 107.

1.2.2 *Typecasting the Romantic Lover*

Modjeska was a celebrated Polish actress who immigrated to the USA in 1876. According to Forbes-Robertson's biography, she studied English under John McCullough (1832-1885) who, as a well-connected actor and California theatre manager, helped her secure engagements in cities across the USA so that by the time she came to the UK in 1880 she was adorned with 'a considerable reputation from America'.⁴² In the summer of that year, Modjeska and Forbes-Robertson met while holidaying separately in Cornwall and, on 19 August, performed some scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* in the rectory gardens at St. Ruan in order to raise funds for an organ for the church.⁴³ Modjeska opened as Juliet to Barrett's *Romeo* at the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Liverpool on 1 September 1880 and the programme was repeated the following week at the Grand Theatre Leeds.⁴⁴ Modjeska and Barrett then moved to the Court Theatre in London, and Forbes-Robertson joined them on 11 December in the role of Maurice de Saxe, the 'gallant reckless young hero', in Henry Herman's (1832-1894) *Adrienne Lecouvreur* (Maurice de Saxe is the lover of the Princess de Bouillon but deserts her for Adrienne Lecouvreur, an actress).⁴⁵ In March 1881, *Adrienne Lecouvreur* was replaced with *Heartsease* (James Mortimer's (1832-1911) adaptation of Alexandre Dumas fils' (1824-1895) *La Dame aux Camélias*) in which Forbes-Robertson played the lover, Armand Duval, with the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* acknowledging that, despite the part being a 'trying' one, his love-making was 'far better and stronger than most of the feeble work that does duty for love-making on our stage'.⁴⁶ In this engagement with Modjeska he had the opportunity of appearing alongside a famous name attracting a large public. Appearing consistently in the part of the romantic lover he became typecast in these roles and, his London debut of *Romeo and Juliet*, solidified the association.

Forbes-Robertson and Modjeska opened *Romeo and Juliet* on 26 March 1881, but press and audience attention focused on Modjeska despite some unfavourable reviews of her Juliet on

⁴² p. 102.

⁴³ J. F. R., 'MADAME MODJESKA', *New Monthly Magazine*, (December 1881): 264-9, *ProQuest*, [accessed 10 May 2019], p. 269; Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 99; 'Commons', *Illustrated London News*, 28 August 1880, p. 12; and 'Cornwall', *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 13 August 1880, p. 4.

⁴⁴ She also took the leads in *Heartsease* and *Adrienne Lecouvreur* in Liverpool and Leeds.

⁴⁵ 'The Theatres', *London Daily News*, 13 December 1880, p. 2.

⁴⁶ 'Drama', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 March 1881, p. 7.

account of her ‘foreign’ accent.⁴⁷ In a two-column article on the play in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the only mention of Forbes-Robertson’s Romeo was that he ‘looked especially picturesque as Romeo, and acted with much gallantry and passion’.⁴⁸ The *London Evening Standard* was surprised at his ‘creditable effort’, maintaining that he had

done many things more than competently hitherto, but nothing that justified the hope that he would play Romeo as well as he does play it. The rich red velvet doublet ensures a picturesque appearance for the young Montague, and he bears himself tenderly and gallantly.⁴⁹

Similarly, *The Globe* praised his Florentine costume in which he ‘looked exceedingly well, and acted with much earnestness and some genuine passion. Unlike most Romeos, he conveyed the idea of being more in love with his mistress than himself, and the adoration in the balcony scene was finely shown’.⁵⁰ In the archetypal role for the romantic lover type, Forbes-Robertson fit the press’s ideas of what Romeo should look like. According to *The Sportsman*,

There is much that is good and strong in [Forbes-Robertson’s Romeo], but it does not altogether satisfy. The touch of weak nonsensical aestheticism which doubtless underlies Romeo’s character, though they called it by another name in 1590-3, is well brought out, but the more robust part of the character is not. The artistic school to which Mr Forbes Robertson belongs, however, perhaps prevents this. One thing, however, may be said with perfect truth, Mr Forbes Robertson’s Romeo is the most gallantly-dressed one we ever remember to have seen.⁵¹

The suggestion is that Forbes-Robertson could successfully perform Romeo’s characteristics that matched his own persona (as the press perceived it).

In Forbes-Robertson’s subsequent performances with Modjeska, Barrett continued to cast him in roles as the lover. *Romeo and Juliet* was followed by *Juana* (7 May 1881), which W. G. Wills wrote as a vehicle play for Modjeska and Barrett. Forbes-Robertson played Carlos de Narcisso, who marries Juana (Modjeska) after she tends his wounds following an attack. Narcisso falls in love with her best friend, Clara Perez, and they begin an affair. Upon discovery of the affair, Juana stabs him to death. Forbes-Robertson’s next role was as Le Compte Paul de Valreas

⁴⁷ For example, ‘Last Night’s Theatricals’, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 27 March 1881, p. 1; and “‘Romeo and Juliet,’ At the Court Theatre’, *London Evening Standard*, 27 March 1881, p. 2. For examples of media coverage focusing on Modjeska see: ‘Britannia Theatre’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 26 March 1881, p. 7; and ‘Theatres’, *Graphic*, 26 March 1881, p. 9.

⁴⁸ ‘Mdme. Modjeska as Juliet’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 March 1881, p. 11.

⁴⁹ “‘Romeo and Juliet,’ At The Court Theatre’, *London Evening Standard*, 27 March 1881, p. 2.

⁵⁰ ‘Court Theatre’, *Globe*, 28 March 1881, p. 2.

⁵¹ ‘Theatricals’, *Sportsman*, 28 March 1881, p. 4.

in *Frou-Frou* (the English translation of Henri Meilhac (1830-1897) and Ludovic Halévy's (1834-1908) *Butterfly*), which opened on 4 June at The Princess's Theatre. Ellen Terry first played *Frou-Frou* in 1879 after she requested the translation from Alice Vansittart Comyns Carr (1850-1927). Compte Paul attempts to woo Gilberte (Modjeska) – a married woman with a son – at first to no avail but she ultimately relents to his advances and the husband, Henri de Sartory (Barrett), kills Compte Paul. According to the *London Evening Standard*, of the main performers 'Mr. Forbes Robertson is perhaps the best able to do justice to the authors' intentions'.⁵² Comyns Carr (the acclaimed costume designer of Ellen Terry) was closely affiliated with the aestheticists and was married to Joseph Comyns Carr (1849-1916), who co-directed the Grosvenor Gallery that championed the paintings of the Pre-Raphaelites.⁵³ It is possible that Forbes-Robertson's public identity aligned with Comyns Carr's interpretation of the part and that he felt at ease in it.

At the beginning of the 1880s, then, Forbes-Robertson had the foundations of his celebrity persona. Aspects of his private self (his beauty and his artistic nature) had been used to cast him in roles that suited these characteristics (young lovers) and, as he continued to play similar parts, he honed his skills for this type. Managers and audiences (if reviews are indicative of audience-response) acclimatised to him playing these roles and, thus, he continued to play similar characters. Playing with Modjeska had proven beneficial as she already possessed a recognisable brand. He had learned that using the names of other established theatrical celebrities for his own promotion was a method of borrowing the value of their name and brand in the creation of his own. In addition to performing with Modjeska in his formative years on the stage, he played alongside the established actresses Ellen Terry, Mary Anderson, and Mrs. Patrick Campbell. The next section concentrates on the impact these celebrities had on the growing celebrity of Forbes-Robertson in the 1880s and 1890s. The actresses were at the apex of their careers when they worked with him and, as stars of their own merit, transferred their own celebrity value to his name. Moreover, whether legitimately or for the purpose of publicity, he had (varying levels of) romantic attachments with these actresses, which created gossip and drew public attention to his name and brand.

⁵² 'Princess's Theatre', *London Evening Standard*, 6 June 1881, p. 2.

⁵³ *The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry, Vol 1: 1865-1888*, ed. by Katharine Cockin (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), p. 39.

1.2.3 *Ellen Terry and the ‘Romantic Juvenile’*

Ellen Terry was born into a theatrical family and, coached in elocution and movement by her actor father, Ben Terry (1818-1896), she was on the stage from the age of three.⁵⁴ Therefore, while only six years older than Forbes-Robertson, by the time he played alongside her in his second role, in *The Wandering Heir* by Charles Reade in 1874, she was already a leading lady. Four years later she joined Irving’s company at the Lyceum and Michael Holroyd describes how in ‘the public imagination Ellen Terry had become an enchantress. Floating serenely across the stage, she was seen as a symbol of pure romance, virginal, unblemished’.⁵⁵ These characteristics formed the basis of her celebrity status.

Reportedly, Reade suggested Forbes-Robertson call on Terry ahead of rehearsals and Forbes-Robertson would retell this occasion for newspapers and eventually in his biography. In 1913 he told *The Northern Whig*,

Never shall I forget [...] my first vision of Miss Terry in her own environment. Out of the Victorian street and its dingy ugliness I was ushered into a room, on the first floor, [...]. Everything was in the most daring but perfect taste, and like nothing else that, up to that time, had been seen in the world. [...].

Whilst I was waiting in wonder, there floated into the room the most superbly beautiful creature that could be described – though indeed it would be impossible to describe the enchantment that Miss Ellen Terry cast around her in those early days, with that magical buoyancy of hers that seems not a mere quality but part of herself. I remember that she wore a characteristic gown of a soft grey-blue that no one else would have thought of wearing at that time, but might have been expressly woven to be in harmony with the tint of her yellow hair.

[...] To come out of the Victorian world to meet her thus was like opening some scullery door and finding oneself suddenly in a dreamland of beauty and art.⁵⁶

The story was similarly described in his autobiography: ‘in floated a vision of loveliness! In a blue kimono and with that wonderful golden hair, she seemed to melt into the surroundings and appeared almost intangible. This was my first sight of Miss Terry’.⁵⁷ Such an elaborate and artistic description of Terry, with its emphasis on her beauty and aura, added to her image as, in

⁵⁴ Moira Shearer, *Ellen Terry* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1998), p. 11.

⁵⁵ *A Strange Dramatic History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their Remarkable Families* (London: Vintage, 2009), p. 5.

⁵⁶ ‘Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Farewell’, *Northern Whig*, 18 March 1913, p. 11.

⁵⁷ p. 67.

Holroyd's terms, a 'Pre-Raphaelite ideal'.⁵⁸ Similarly, writing about her first acting experience with Forbes-Robertson in 1908, Terry articulated, 'Everyone knows how good-looking [Forbes-Robertson] is now, but as a boy he was wonderful – a dreamy poetic looking creature in a blue smock, far more of an artist than an actor'.⁵⁹ This engagement marked the beginning of a friendship that continued throughout their careers and, as their celebrity image complemented each other's, they appear to have maintained the illusion of each other's celebrity by carefully reconstructing their accounts of their early association. For instance, neither mentions the less glamorous aspect to their friendship, reported by Beatrice Forbes-Robertson (1883-1967), when Terry and her children were 'paying guest[s]' of Frances and John Forbes-Robertson in the 1870s due to economic strains (on both sides).⁶⁰

The various biographers reveal that Forbes-Robertson's appreciation of Terry went further than a professional appreciation. Beatrice described,

The three elder boys all fell in love with Ellen, then twenty-six and much their senior, but glorious with youth and beauty, Johnston at twenty-one fell passionately, Ian, at sixteen, idealistically and Norman, as was his wont, gaily and flirtatiously. My mother, barely sixteen, encountered Johnston, white with emotion, tearing down a street after Ellen's hansom cab to get a glimpse of her as the horse turned the corner.⁶¹

Forbes-Robertson's reported age places this event around the time that he was playing in *The Wandering Heir*. Forbes-Robertson and Terry's various biographers also allude to Forbes-Robertson's infatuation with Terry.⁶² Terry's biographers refer to her marriage to actor Charles Kelly (1839-1885) in February 1877 as the end of the unrequited love, whereas the Forbes-Robertson biographers suggest that, only after 'she became the special property of his beloved Irving, [did he withdraw] entirely'.⁶³ Since there was an overlap in her marriage to Kelly and her

⁵⁸ Holroyd, p. 5.

⁵⁹ *The Story of my Life Recollections and Reflections* (New York: Doubleday, 1908) in *Internet Archive* <<https://archive.org/details/storymylifereco00terrgoog>> [accessed 1 October 2014], p. 92.

⁶⁰ N. Fitzmaurice (ed.), *Family Legends* (London: Satin Publishing, 2016), p. 78. The 1871 Census lists an Amelia S. Bath as staying with them but she is registered as a sister-in-law of John Forbes-Robertson (Census. 1871. England. Islington, London, Forbes-Robertson household; RG10/256, ED. 17, p. 41. <http://ancestry.co.uk>: accessed 25 March 2019).

⁶¹ Fitzmaurice, pp. 78-79.

⁶² Nina Auerbach, *Player in Her Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), p. 183; Diana Forbes-Robertson, *Maxine* (London: Hamilton, 1964), p. 132-133; Fostekew, p. 24; Roger Manvell, *Ellen Terry* (London: Heinemann, 1968), p. 87 and pp. 98-99.

⁶³ Diana Forbes-Robertson, pp. 132-133.

engagement with Irving, it is possible that both accounts are true, but both confirm that it was more than a fleeting fancy and well known to the members of theatre profession. The extent of the love attraction is unknown but, if the biographers are to be believed, was genuine. He painted her portrait (it was displayed at the 108th Royal Academy exhibition in April 1876), which may have been an expression of his sentiment (Fig 1.4). From September of that year Forbes-Robertson played at The Haymarket in W. S. Gilbert's (1836-1911) *Dan'l Druce, Blacksmith*. He played Geoffrey Wynyard – the lover of Dorothy Druce, who was played by Marion Terry (1853-1930) – Ellen Terry's sister. The *London Daily News* reported that 'the loves of Dorothy Druce and the young sailor Geoffrey Wynyard, [find] in Miss Marion Terry and Mr. Forbes Robertson representatives fulfilling in every way the author's ideal'.⁶⁴ Forbes-Robertson was possibly attempting to romance Ellen Terry off stage while playing the lover to her sister on stage. *The Graphic* was complimentary of his performance: 'Mr. Forbes Robinson [*sic*] on his part is not only a very presentable lover in his picturesque costume of a sailor [...] but is a graceful and refined actor'.⁶⁵ In the same year, Ellen Terry met Kelly at the Court Theatre while under the management of Hare, and they were married in November 1877. According to the Terry biographers, Forbes-Robertson came to The Court and left in disgust after hearing the news.⁶⁶ It is impossible to know how much of this was seen by the public, but those in the theatres who were aware of Forbes-Robertson's devotion to Terry may have associated him with the characteristics of a romantic lover on and off the stage.

⁶⁴ 'Drama', *London Daily News*, 13 September 1876, p. 5.

⁶⁵ 'Theatres', *Graphic*, 16 September 1876, p. 9.

⁶⁶ Shearer, p. 57; Marguerite Sheen, *A Pride of Terrys* (London: Longmans, 1962, repr. Endeavour Media, 2018), Kindle e-book, loc 3075.



Fig 1.4: Forbes-Robertson's portrait of Ellen Terry, (1876).⁶⁷

Some eighteen years later, while Forbes-Robertson was under contract to Hare, Irving requested (and was granted) Forbes-Robertson's release so that he could play in Comyns Carr's *King Arthur* at The Lyceum. Opening on 12 January 1895, Irving played the title role and Forbes-Robertson played Lancelot to Terry's Guinevere to immense success. According to the *Referee*, 'The great thing of the play is Mr. Forbes Robertson's Lancelot. [...] His performance of Lancelot is the perfection of acting'.⁶⁸ *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* published an illustrated in-depth discussion of *King Arthur*, observing that the love scene between Lancelot and Guinevere 'is among the most telling scenes in the play, and it was acted with most impressive force and

⁶⁷ *Ellen Terry*, oil paint on canvas, 60.8 × 50.6cm, National Portrait Gallery London, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw06271/Ellen-Terry?LinkID=mp04458&role=sit&rNo=2> [accessed 21 October 2014]

⁶⁸ 'Lyceum—Saturday Night', *Referee*, 13 January 1895, p. 3.

fervour by Miss Ellen Terry and Mr. Forbes Robertson'.⁶⁹ In an interview, Terry maintained, 'My best scene is my love scene with Lancelot (splendidly played by Mr Forbes Robertson, as you may imagine)'.⁷⁰ For those in the audience with a long memory, the love scenes may have been reminiscent of an off-stage courtship between the two. Additionally, given that Lancelot is the lover of the married Guinevere it may have suggested an off-stage love triangle (Forbes-Robertson, Terry, and Irving). That Hare released Forbes-Robertson for the role is also an indicator that Irving required this specific actor with his specific off-stage qualities, connotations, and history to play the role. After the opening week, *The Sporting Times* forwarded that 'he has firmly stamped himself as the indisputable leading "Romantic Juvenile" [...] of the present time'.⁷¹ Thus did Forbes-Robertson borrow the celebrity of Terry to enhance his image as a romantic type. There is a suggestion from their biographies and press interviews that Terry was complicit in maintaining a suggestion of romance to boost both of their celebrity profiles. Forbes-Robertson's love for Terry may have been unrequited (or a carefully-maintained construct), but it helped to shape the course of his career. He had more success in his next romantic attachment with Mary Anderson, and his linking of his name with hers brought the benefit of spreading his brand beyond the UK.

1.2.4 *Mary Anderson and the USA*

Stratford can seldom have been as gay as it was during these two or three days; never surely was it gayer. From London came down a large deputation of journalists. The trains brought many an eager throng from the teeming hotels of sprightly Leamington. One party of twenty-five Americans came in from the sylvan hamlet of Broadway. [...] A more distinguished or a more judicious audience than was assembled in the Memorial Theatre could not be wished and has not often been seen. Mr. Forbes Robertson, an intellectual and graceful actor, thoughtful in spirit and polished in method, began the performance, coming on as *Orlando*. No performer other than Miss Anderson, however, could expect to attract especial notice on this night.⁷²

Thus did William Winter (1836-1917), a drama critic and friend of American actress, Mary Anderson, describe the furore around Anderson's first appearance in the role of Rosalind in *As*

⁶⁹ "'King Arthur" at the Lyceum', *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 20 January 1895, p. 9.

⁷⁰ 'Miss Terry Interviewed', *Bristol Mercury*, 11 January 1895, p. 5.

⁷¹ 'Things Theatrical', *Sporting Times*, 19 January 1895, p. 3.

⁷² William Winter, *The Stage Life of Mary Anderson* (New York: G. J. Coombes, 1886) in *Internet Archive* <https://archive.org/details/stagelifeofmarya00wint>. [accessed 20 December 2018], pp. 83-84.

You Like It at Stratford-upon-Avon on 29 August 1885. The occasion was a benefit performance for the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre fund and its director, Charles Edward Flower (1830-1892), used the £100 (equivalent to £10,610 in 2018) raised from the performance to purchase two decorative panels to adorn the front of the building. As Winter highlights, Anderson was the star performer of the show and her debut in a new role was a major attraction for her public. The performance also marked Forbes-Robertson's first on-stage appearance as Anderson's leading man, but she was the star and he was merely one of her supporting cast.

A few weeks prior to this event, Forbes-Robertson had performed in the farewell performance of the Bancrofts at the Haymarket, having been engaged with them from November 1883 until their retirement in June 1885. During this engagement he had benefitted from a more prominent position than he had occupied in previous engagements with them, and from the exposure of acting in a distinguished ensemble with the opportunity to appear in challenging roles for longer runs.⁷³ Despite the benefits of performing in the Bancroft contract, Forbes-Robertson was in the shadow of Squire Bancroft's celebrity. When Henry Eugene Abbey (1846-1896) engaged him as the leading man in Mary Anderson's US tour, it was an ideal opportunity to play a more visibly dominant role. Moreover, as a devout Roman-Catholic (and always chaperoned by a member of her family when travelling) and studious player of 'legitimate' drama, Anderson contributed a reputation of purity and intellectualism to Forbes-Robertson's profile. In 1893, W. A. Lewis Bettany indicated that Forbes-Robertson's absence from London theatres at a pivotal moment in his career might have arrested his reputation in the UK as it allowed other actors to take centre stage.⁷⁴ However, his later successes in the US may have been the result of the lessons he learnt in managing a tour abroad during this trip. The coupling of his name with Anderson's on her 1885-1886 tour was also an opportunity for his own celebrity brand to emerge in a new market with the benefit of already having the attention of the theatre-going public. This section of the chapter, therefore, explores the significance of this connection with Anderson's celebrity in boosting his own celebrity profile in the UK and USA – starting with the performance of *As You Like It* in Stratford-upon-Avon on 29 August 1885, to the end of his contract with the closing of *The Winter's Tale* in December 1887.

⁷³ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 124.

⁷⁴ W. A. Lewis Bettany, *The Strange Case of Mr. Forbes-Robertson* (London: Eglington, 1893), pp. 155-161.

Anderson (1859-1940) made her first appearance on stage at the age of 16 at Macaulay's Theater in Louisville on 27 November 1875 as Juliet, but she swiftly became celebrated across the US as 'Our Mary'.⁷⁵ Writing in 1885, J.M. Farrar opined that she

burst as a star upon the theatrical world, and a star she has remained to this day, because, through all her successes, she never for a moment lost sight of the fact that she could only maintain her ground by patient study, and steady persistent hard work.⁷⁶

She made her first appearance in London as Parthenia in *Ingomar the Barbarian* on 1 September 1883 at the Lyceum, subleased for a season from Irving while he toured.⁷⁷ Irving had encouraged her to open with *Romeo and Juliet*, but *Ingomar* was a favourite amongst her US public so she did not take his advice. The critics considered the play to be old-fashioned for London tastes, but they praised the artistic mounting of the scenery and the play proved popular with theatre-goers, perhaps for the attraction of Anderson as an American curiosity.⁷⁸ She followed *Ingomar* with the role of Pauline in Edward Bulwer-Lytton's *Lady of Lyons* (27 October 1883), and then she played Galatea (from 8 December 1883) in W. S. Gilbert's *Pygmalion and Galatea*.

As *The Glasgow Evening Star* explained in May 1884,

Coming to us from America with the reputation of being the foremost exponent of histrionic art in that country, it was but natural that her advent should be regarded with very critical eyes by many who thought that America claimed too much for their charming actress.⁷⁹

Such claims in the press piqued the curiosity of British theatregoers so that after only three months in London *The Era* commented that her success was

⁷⁵ She initially faced criticism of her acting abilities in California but following encouragement from veteran actor, Edwin Booth (1833-1893), in 1876 she was offered a star position in John T. Ford's (1829-1894) company as part of an entourage on a USA provincial tour. On this tour she visited California (1876) and New York (1877) where the critics viewed her as lacking in refinement and technique. On a return trip to New York in 1880, and on subsequent tours across the Eastern States, her reviewers were more favourable and she became celebrated across the country, (Mary Anderson, *A Few Memories* (New York: Harper, 1896) in *Internet Archive* <<https://archive.org/details/afewmemories01andegoog/page/n76>> [accessed 20 December 2018]).

⁷⁶ *Mary Anderson: the Story of her Life and Professional Career* (New York: N. L. Munro, 1885) <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14758/14758-h/14758-h.htm>, chapter iv.

⁷⁷ *Ingomar the Barbarian* is an English translation by Maria Lovell of an 1846 Viennese play 'Son of the Wilderness' by Friedrich Halm.

⁷⁸ Jeffrey Richards, *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), pp. 79-81.

⁷⁹ 'Miss Anderson at the Royalty', *Glasgow Evening Star*, 6 May 1884, in Farrar, chapter vii.

quite phenomenal. The receipts for six nights have amounted to the handsome sum of £2,000 [equivalent to £204,800 in 2018]. Royalty has honoured her with its presence, and crowded audiences have testified their appreciation of an assumption that may without exaggeration be described as a living poem.⁸⁰

On 26 January 1884, she added an afterpiece to *Pygmalion and Galatea*, playing the part of Clarice in a one-act drama, *Comedy and Tragedy*, written specially for her by W. S. Gilbert. ‘So popular is Miss Mary Anderson,’ observed *The Graphic*, ‘that the fashion of the costume and the style in which she is to wear her hair in Mr. Gilbert’s little drama [...] are topics that have lately occasioned a mild sort of excitement’.⁸¹ She continued the run of the two plays until 5 April 1884 before touring them around the UK until June – further expanding her network of fans. The press announced in March that Anderson would take the Lyceum for a second season, and so she was able to continue the run of *Pygmalion and Galatea* from 6 September 1884 until the opening of *Romeo and Juliet* (with William Terriss (1847-1897) as Romeo), which ran from 1 November 1884 until 21 February 1885.⁸² From 25 February until 28 March she assumed the character of Julia in James Sheridan Knowles’s (1784-1862) *The Hunchback* and, to close her second season, she reproduced her popular plays throughout April.

By August 1885 Anderson’s celebrity profile was valuable enough to draw crowds to the benefit performance at the Memorial Theatre. ‘No doubt,’ argued *The Graphic*, ‘the popularity of Miss Mary Anderson and the public curiosity to see that graceful actress in a part so captivating as Rosalind’ resulted in the popularity of the performance.⁸³ In the Victorian era, the character of Rosalind was almost a test piece or a rite of passage for actresses aiming for greatness. According to *The Era*, it ‘offered irresistible temptations to almost every actress of eminence, and it is not surprising that it should be essayed by those who if they have not yet attained eminence, think it within their reach’.⁸⁴ The histrionic part required versatility due to the breadth of emotions on display while also being comical.⁸⁵ Success in this role would consolidate her status as an accomplished performer – an aspect of her celebrity persona.

⁸⁰ ‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 15 December 1883, p. 8.

⁸¹ ‘Theatres’, *Graphic*, 26 January 1884, p. 12.

⁸² ‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 15 March 1884, p. 8.

⁸³ ‘Theatres’, *Graphic*, 5 September 1885, p.6.

⁸⁴ ‘Mrs Langtry as Rosalind’, *Era*, 30 September 1882, p. 5.

⁸⁵ Sophie Duncan, *Shakespeare's Women and the Fin de Siècle* (Oxford: UP, 2016), p. 18.

From the official announcement on 4 August 1885 until the performance on 29 August, the press generated hype around Anderson's debut of *As You Like It* in Stratford-on-Avon. Forbes-Robertson playing Orlando to her Rosalind was of little significance as Anderson's supporting cast were either listed almost as an afterthought following discussion of Anderson's Rosalind (for example, in *Sporting Life*), or not included at all (for example, in the *Illustrated London News*).⁸⁶ *The Sportsman* hailed the occasion of witnessing 'the representation of the character of Rosalind by Miss Mary Anderson' as 'the most important event of the month,' suggesting that the play was merely a vehicle for the display of Anderson's celebrity.⁸⁷ The management arranged trains to transport the London press corps from London to Stratford, prices for the performance doubled (in some instances quadrupled), and yet the house was full. As an additional novelty, a deer was killed on the Lucy Estate at neighbouring Charlecote Park to be used on-stage in the forest scene to add an element of realism.⁸⁸ The *Pall Mall Gazette* observed the success of the enterprise: 'Miss Anderson has increased her reputation, Mr. Abbey has launched his tour under the most favourable auspices as regards publicity, and the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre, besides replenishing its exchequer, has gained in status'.⁸⁹ Despite critics commenting that Anderson's Rosalind lacked refinement and that Forbes-Robertson's Orlando was too modern, commentators emphasised the significance of the event as a whole with Anderson's celebrity at the centre.

Anderson followed the Memorial Theatre event with a short UK tour before she and her company left for the US from Cobh (known as Queenstown by the British at the time), Ireland on 27 September. The publicity surrounding the Stratford event was therefore a springboard for the US tour, as noted by the commentators at the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*:

The whole arrangement thus developed - shall we say de generated? - into a huge indirect advertisement for the forthcoming tour, in the course of which Miss Mary Anderson means to include *As You Like It* in her *répertoire*. The mere fact that the popular young American actress gratified a natural and creditable wish in visiting Shakespeare's birthplace professionally did not, of course, need all this *réclame*; but New York managers are wise in their generation, and know exactly how to make the most of any opportunity for puffing their wares on the cheap.⁹⁰

⁸⁶ 'The Stroller', *Sporting Life*, 19 August 1885, p. 3; 'The Playhouses', *Illustrated London News*, 29 August 1885, p. 6.

⁸⁷ 'The Looker On', *Sportsman*, 22 August 1885, p. 3.

⁸⁸ 'Mary Anderson at Stratford-on-Avon', *Liverpool Mercury*, 31 August 1885, p. 6; 'Miss Mary Anderson as Rosalind', *Morning Post*, 31 August 1885, p. 6.

⁸⁹ 'Mary Anderson at Stratford-Upon-Avon', *Pall Mall Gazette*, p. 2.

⁹⁰ 'Drama', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 September 1885, p.6.

Similarly, the *Liverpool Mercury* argued that ‘to the world at large, and the American in particular, [...] Stratford is merely the spot where Shakespeare lived’ and described how lucrative the Shakespeare association was for the town as (particularly American) tourists flocked to pay homage.⁹¹ The British press may have been cynical of Anderson’s motivations, but the media event achieved its goal with the American press gushing at the prospect of ‘Our Mary’ playing Shakespeare in such idyllic surroundings. The *St. Paul Daily Globe* opined that

the idea of the only Juliet going down the Eastern Counties railroad, as far as Stratford, to play Rosalind under the shade of the leafy screens which presumably once sheltered the immortal bard from the summer sun, [...] was certainly a very clever notion. All London was agog at the idea, [...] The affair] will unquestionably enhance the desire of her compatriots to witness her performances when she shortly returns to her native land.⁹²

Ahead of her appearance in Salt Lake City on 30 and 31 March 1886, *The Salt Lake Herald* retold the event as ‘one of the prettiest bits of romance and sentiment in the history of the stage’.⁹³ Seven months after the event in Stratford, it was still generating interest, adding a novelty value to the performance.

As his first visit to the United States (and his first trip outside of Europe), the 30-week tour was a profound endeavour for Forbes-Robertson. He made new acquaintances through his brother Norman Forbes (1858-1932), such as his introduction with theatrical star Tommaso Salvini (1829-1915), and saw the US before skyscrapers and the building boom.⁹⁴ Anderson included in her repertoire the six plays she had performed in the UK: *Pygmalion and Galatea*, *Tragedy and Comedy*, *Ingomar*, *The Lady of Lyons*, *As You Like It*, and *Romeo and Juliet*, so Forbes-Robertson was new to all except the Shakespearean roles. Commencing in New York, the tour continued to Boston, Providence, New Haven, Hartford, Worcester, Springfield, Troy, Buffalo, Syracuse, Utica, Albany, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Washington D.C., Cincinnati, Cleveland, Detroit, Indianapolis, Louisville, St. Louis, Chicago, Minneapolis, St. Paul, Omaha, Denver, Salt Lake City, Sacramento, San Francisco, Chicago, Boston, and ended back in New York in May 1886.

⁹¹ ‘Mary Anderson at Stratford-on-Avon’, *Liverpool Mercury*, 31 August 1885, p. 6.

⁹² ‘Mary at Stratford’, *St. Paul Daily Globe*, 6 September 1885, p. 4.

⁹³ ‘Dramatic and Lyric’, *Salt Lake Herald*, 28 March 1886, p. 9.

⁹⁴ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), pp. 130-131.

The tour opened with *As You Like It* at the Star Theatre in New York on 12 October 1885 and, by 9 October, the *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer* reported that over \$5,000 [equivalent to £106,000 in 2018] worth of tickets had been sold for Anderson's first appearance.⁹⁵ *The Sun* in New York reported that, ahead of the opening performance, 'she was regarded as an exhibit of her own personality, without much thought of Shakespeare's gently audacious heroine'.⁹⁶ However, despite the excitement around her return to the US, her reception divided opinions. Seats at her performances in New York and Boston were charged at \$2.50, almost double the usual price. Prices were later lowered to \$1.50, or what was known as 'normal prices', in order to secure full houses when it became evident that the majority of the public were not prepared to pay the higher price.⁹⁷ The level of popularity with her public as a celebrity may not have directly correlated with the level of popularity with her audience as a performer.

The press was hostile at her controversial decision to bring her English company and the lack of Americans in her cast, accusing her of being an Anglophile.⁹⁸ She had to defend her decision to bring her cast on the basis that they had performed with her in the UK and it provided continuity and ease. This led to rumours that she employed the English actors because they were cheap: in April 1886 a *Salt Lake Herald* commentator claimed that '[i]t is common report that young Forrest Robertson [*sic*], a fine voiced young fellow, gets but £20 per week'.⁹⁹ This error with Forbes-Robertson's name demonstrates how little known he was in the US. In justifying her supporting cast members, Anderson built and promoted their celebrity personae. In a press interview, Anderson's business manager, C. J. Abud, said, 'Mr. Robertson, her leading man, comes of a very high family and besides being an actor is quite an artist, many of his pictures having been hung on the walls of the Academy'.¹⁰⁰ Rumours about the leading man's reputation peppered gossip columns; for instance, according to *The Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, Forbes-Robertson was a graduate of Cambridge.¹⁰¹ Regardless of the verity of the reports, his name received attention.

⁹⁵ 'News in Brief', *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, 9 October 1885, p. 1.

⁹⁶ 'Amusements', *Sun* [New York], 13 October 1885, p. 3.

⁹⁷ 'Miss Mary Anderson', *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 17 December 1885, p. 1.

⁹⁸ 'Broadbrim's New York Letter', *Carbon Advocate*, 24 October 1885, p. 2.

⁹⁹ 'Mary Anderson's Anglicism', *Salt Lake Herald*, 11 April 1886, p.2.

¹⁰⁰ 'Mary Anderson', *Salt Lake Herald*, 30 March 1886, p. 8.

¹⁰¹ 'Mary Anderson's Private Secretary', *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, 29 January 1886, p. 2.

Despite the initial hostility, Anderson's tour was a sensation, particularly in pecuniary terms as reports claimed that the tour earned \$370,000, (equivalent to £7.88m in 2018), of which she retained a third, rendering her the highest-grossing actress of her time.¹⁰² As for Forbes-Robertson, the critics in New York initially received him unenthusiastically. As noted, he was new to four of the six plays in Anderson's repertoire, which might have resulted in some nervousness as he played in New York for the first time. Within weeks the press hailed him a 'decided hit' and *The Portland Daily* commented that 'an equally intellectual and refined actor has seldom come to us from the English stage'.¹⁰³ In spite of the hostility towards the English cast, he was described as the best Pygmalion and, by the time they reached San Francisco in April 1885, *The Spirit of the Times* reported that 'to many he was as great an attraction as the star'.¹⁰⁴ On this tour the public came to recognise his name and brand, partially as a result of Forbes-Robertson impressing his audiences with his acting abilities, but reports of his family background, theatrical heritage, capabilities as an artist, and gossip attached to his name, also enhanced his profile.

After the US tour, Anderson sailed back to England on 3 June 1886 and, on medical advice, took an extended rest from work. From February to April 1887 Forbes-Robertson joined Kate Vaughan's (1852-1903) company at the Opera Comique in London, but then rejoined Anderson on a seven-week provincial tour of the UK (Birmingham, Sheffield, Nottingham, Newcastle, Bradford, Liverpool, Glasgow, and Edinburgh) in April and May 1887. Reviews of Forbes-Robertson's performances indicate that his technique had improved and that he had become a more noteworthy leading man. A critic who saw him perform at the Prince's Theatre in Manchester said that he 'distinguished' himself and, according to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, his performance in Nottingham on 23 April 1887 was his best to date.¹⁰⁵ During the tour Anderson added Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale* to her usual repertoire in a media event orchestrated in a similar fashion to the Stratford event of 1885. With Forbes-Robertson both playing Leontes and working as costume designer, *The Winter's Tale* premiered at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham

¹⁰² "Mary Anderson's Income", *Bismarck Weekly Tribune*, 7 May 1886, p. 6; Eliza Archard, 'Mary Anderson', *Helena Weekly Herald*, 5 November 1885, p. 1.

¹⁰³ 'Miss Mary Anderson to Appear as Rosalind', *Morning Journal and Courier*, 8 December 1885, p. 2; 'Music and Drama', *Portland Daily Press*, 22 October 1885, p. 4.

¹⁰⁴ 'Theatre', *Spirit of the Times*, 1886, p.426.

¹⁰⁵ 'Manchester', *Era*, 30 April 1887, p.18; 'Miss Mary Anderson in Bohemia', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 25 April 1887, p. 5.

on Shakespeare's birthday – 23 April 1887. Again, they provided a special saloon train to transport dramatic critics to the event and, in an unprecedented experiment to again display her versatility as a performer, Anderson doubled the parts of Hermione and Perdita.¹⁰⁶ *The Referee* acknowledged the similarities with her previous media event: 'Of course, the event excited immense local interest, as did the appearance of Miss Anderson as Rosalind at Stratford-on-Avon nearly two years ago. The house could have been sold twenty times over'.¹⁰⁷ Critics generally disliked the doubling of the roles of Hermione and Perdita; they considered her stronger as Perdita than Hermione, and, as the text had to be altered so that the two characters did not have to speak in the same scene, to some it was seen as adulterating Shakespeare.¹⁰⁸ The critics praised the elaborate staging and Forbes-Robertson's acting but, they argued, his good looks did not suit the role.

While on the UK tour they also premiered Dean Milman's (1791-1868) *Fazio*, or 'The Italian Wife's Revenge' on Saturday 14 May 1887 at the Alexandra Theatre in Liverpool. The press criticised Anderson for not having the necessary emotional range for her part, but praised Forbes-Robertson's *Fazio*. *The Stage* asserted, 'Mr. Forbes Robertson's *Fazio* is about the best thing he has done here. The part seems to suit him, and he does full justice to it. He deservedly shared the honours of the night with Miss Anderson'.¹⁰⁹ Anderson decided to open the Autumn 1887 season at the Lyceum with *The Winter's Tale* on 10 September 1887 as, in this play, she was the star and, through doubling the two major female parts, she could display her abilities. *The Winter's Tale* was a commercial success, running until 24 March 1888 and the end of her occupancy of the Lyceum. Playing in a long run of the same part (*The Winter's Tale* ran for 166 performances) also allowed Forbes-Robertson to become comfortable in the part of Leontes.

Ahead of the Lyceum season, rumours surfaced of an engagement between Anderson and Forbes-Robertson. The rumour can be traced to 'Carados', the pen-name of theatre critic Henry Chance Newton (1854-1931), who published it in *The Referee* on 19 June 1887.¹¹⁰ US newspapers reprinted the rumours, which were so widely believed that Anderson ensured that a denial of the engagement was equally widely published and Newton was officially asked to

¹⁰⁶ 'Theatres', *Graphic*, 23 April 1887, p. 9.

¹⁰⁷ "'The Winter's Tale' at Nottingham", *Referee*, 24 April 1887, p. 3.

¹⁰⁸ 'Theatrical News', *Bristol Mercury*, 17 September 1887, p. 13.

¹⁰⁹ 'Fazio; or, The Italian Wife's Revenge', *Stage*, 20 May 1887, p. 16.

¹¹⁰ Carados, 'Dramatic & Musical Gossip', *Referee*, 19 June 1887, p. 3.

contradict his statement in the following edition of *The Referee*.¹¹¹ It could be surmised that the rumour was a publicity stunt to arouse interest in the forthcoming production of *The Winter's Tale*. Forbes-Robertson and Newton were both members of the Garrick Club and would become close enough that Forbes-Robertson wrote an introduction to Newton's collection of stage memories, *Cues & Curtain Calls* (1927), and therefore collusion was possible. Newspapers and gossip columns made frequent conjectures of Anderson's potential engagements to such an extent that one satirically reported that 'Mary Anderson is engaged to a Hindoo snake charmer'.¹¹² However, according to the biographies written by the Forbes-Robertson descendants, there was a formal engagement between the two during the American tour that ended when Forbes-Robertson refused to have any potential children brought up as Roman Catholics.¹¹³ Rumours of a romantic relationship between them began as early as November 1885 when they were playing *Romeo and Juliet* in New York. A denial printed in *The Evening Star* explained that rumours started because '[i]t is natural, of course, to couple the name of so beautiful and successful a young woman as Miss Anderson with the name of some marriageable man'.¹¹⁴ The *St. Paul Daily Globe* proposed that Forbes-Robertson had been pinpointed as a potential fiancé for Anderson because her acting in romantic scenes was radically improved 'and it is ascribed to a little touch of reality on her part'.¹¹⁵ In 1889, *The Cheltenham Examiner* claimed that '[i]t is a known fact that [Anderson] was engaged to Mr. Forbes Robertson, jun., and that she cancelled her promise to him on his venturing to criticise her acting'.¹¹⁶ After the run at the Lyceum, Forbes-Robertson did not join her for a US tour of *The Winter's Tale*, instead moving on to play in *The Scarlet Letter* at the Royalty Theatre. Jack Barnes took his place and the press reported that 'Forbes Robertson and Miss Anderson did not get along very well together in the latter part of the recent season, and the incompatibility was so great that somebody to take his place was sought for'.¹¹⁷ Anderson's 1896 biography also hints that there was a disharmonious separation of the two parties as, despite his

¹¹¹ Carados, 'Dramatic & Musical Gossip', *Referee*, 26 June 1887, p. 3; 'Dramatic and Lyric', *Salt Lake Herald*, 17 July 1887, p. 10; 'Dramatic Notes', *New York Tribune*, 21 August 1887, p. 4.

¹¹² 'For and About Women', *Times and Democrat*, 3 June 1866, p. 3.

¹¹³ Diana Forbes-Robertson, p. 133; Fostekew, p. 25; Alan Dent, *Mrs. Patrick Campbell* (London: Museum Press, 1961), p. 135.

¹¹⁴ 'Our Mary Won't Mary', *Evening Star*, 14 November 1885, p. 3.

¹¹⁵ 'Midst the Madding Throng', *St. Paul Daily Globe*, 21 March 1886, p. 4.

¹¹⁶ 'A Lady's London Letter', *Cheltenham Examiner*, 27 March 1889, p. 2.

¹¹⁷ 'Music and Drama', *Paisley & Renfrewshire Gazette*, 1 September 1888, p. 2.

being her leading man through her most successful and lucrative seasons, she mentions him by name only twice.¹¹⁸

It is possible there was a genuine romantic attachment between the two actors but, regardless of the truth in the matter, the story generated gossip and a degree of public interest serving as publicity for their performances together, while Forbes-Robertson's public persona benefitted from the association with Anderson and the rumours of marriage gave his name exposure at a critical time as he was establishing his star image. Anderson was known as a diligent student of drama, but her productions were also visually impressive and artistic spectacles. The commercial value in Mary Anderson's celebrity image in the 1880s was based on the perception of respectability, purity, and her excellence in a type of classical theatre that was educational and civilizing. Her family had initially been opposed to her entering the theatre profession, so this may have encouraged her to play in only classical or Shakespearean roles, which, in turn, influenced the type of personality her public saw in her. Describing Forbes-Robertson's performance in *Pygmalion and Galatea*, Winter described his appearance as 'classic, his bearing noble, his delivery of the text flexible, graceful, and finely intelligent'.¹¹⁹ Forbes-Robertson was therefore a useful accessory as his characteristics complemented her persona but, by the end of the run of *The Winter's Tale*, he had established a measure of celebrity that meant he was beyond playing an accessory to another's stardom.

1.2.5 Mrs. Patrick Campbell's Notoriety

During the first half of the 1890s, Forbes-Robertson had the security of being employed by Hare at the Garrick Theatre under a contract that lasted for six years from 24 April 1889. Of particular note, Forbes-Robertson played in *The Profligate* (opening 24 April 1889) and *Lady Bountiful* (opening 7 March 1891) which were new plays written by Pinero with Hare and Forbes-Robertson in mind for the leading male roles. That playwrights were beginning to write plays to suit his persona demonstrates that his celebrity was established, and Pinero's plays were popular with audiences. However, due to its controversial presentation of a sex-worker and fear of offending Victorian audiences, Hare categorically refused to present Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*. The heroine of the social drama is Paula Tanqueray – a woman with a sexual past

¹¹⁸ Anderson, p. 200 and p. 246.

¹¹⁹ p. 127.

trying to appear respectable after her marriage to Aubrey Tanqueray. Alexander agreed to take on the play at the St. James's and, after a long search for the ideal Paula Tanqueray, he engaged Campbell for the part. After turbulent rehearsals (Campbell was to become known for being difficult and unprofessional in rehearsals), *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* opened on 27 May 1893 and Campbell's biographer, Margot Peters, asserts that after 227 London performances, the play 'brought Alexander £36,688 13s. [equivalent to £3,997,000 in 2018] in receipts, made Pinero's reputation, and put Stella at the head of her profession'.¹²⁰ Hare did not pass up the opportunity of playing in Pinero's next play, *The Notorious Mrs. Ebbsmith* (from 13 March 1895), nor did he fail to engage Campbell – the latest stage sensation – as Agnes Ebbsmith and Forbes-Robertson as Lucas Cleeve (the two characters were an unmarried couple critical of marriage as an institution). After this role Forbes-Robertson went into management at the Lyceum and, as a new actor-manager in a competitive market, needed all the promotion from celebrity value he could muster. Campbell was under contract to Tree, but Forbes-Robertson paid her £30 per week (equivalent to £3,268 in 2018) until the end of her obligations in order to secure her for his theatre. Upon joining him she was paid £100 per week (equivalent to £10,890 in 2018), plus two per cent of gross receipts when they exceeded £180 per performance (equivalent to £19,610 in 2018).¹²¹ Thus began the partnership of Forbes-Robertson and Campbell – an actress whose celebrity image was the antithesis of Anderson's.

If Anderson had 'burst as a star upon the theatrical world' then so too did Campbell. Unlike Anderson, Campbell was driven to the stage out of economic necessity when her husband, Patrick Campbell, went abroad to find work leaving her and two children behind in England. Stella Campbell's first engagement was with Frank Green's Company in 1888 at £2 10s. (equivalent to £273.50 in 2018), per week. The following year she joined Ben Greet's (1857-1936) Woodland players, at which point she started using 'Mrs. Patrick Campbell' as her stage name.¹²² On 1 August 1891 she played her London premier in the role of Astrea in *The Trumpet Call* by George Robert Sims (1847-1922) and Robert Buchanan (1841-1901). *The Era* said she gave an 'excellent and realistic picture of the character' and praised her for '[overcoming] a very trying accident to her costume which would have unnerved some more experienced

¹²⁰ *Mrs Pat: The Life of Mrs Patrick Campbell* (London: The Bodley Head, 1984), p. 96.

¹²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 110.

¹²² Mrs. Patrick Campbell, *My Life and Some Letters* (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1922), in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/stream/mylifesomeletter00camp/mylifesomeletter00camp_djvu.txt> p. 50,

performers'.¹²³ During the performance her skirt had fallen down, leaving her on stage in her undergarments. As *The Era* narrates, she maintained her composure and finished her line before leaving the stage. In her memoirs she reported that she had received letters accusing her of having staged the incident in order to draw attention and gain notoriety, while in a 1961 biography of her life, Alan Dent quotes several eyewitnesses, some of whom suggested that it was accidental while others claimed it was deliberate.¹²⁴

Deliberate or otherwise, it caught the public's attention. Just two years after her London debut she performed as Paula Tanqueray and, as Dent describes, overnight she 'had attained high, genuine, capital-shaking renown. [...] Within six months a provincial tour – cunningly arranged by her management – made her the talk of the country as well'.¹²⁵ Her sudden celebrity was the result of notoriety of both her public persona and the fictional roles she was playing. The takings from *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* and the high salary Forbes-Robertson paid her both indicate that notoriety had commercial value in the theatre industry. Sos Eltis describes how, throughout her career, Campbell sought to balance a respectable private image (such as travelling for work with her children) with her lucrative stage career. Using her married name offered a sense of respectability and sent out a message to her audience that she was not sexually available. As much as she tried to maintain a distance between her on-stage personae and her public personae, her public would draw overlaps. Campbell continued to play transgressive women because these were the roles that subsequent managers deemed her most valuable in:

a radical opponent of marriage in Pinero's *The Notorious Mrs Ebbsmith*, a rehabilitated prostitute in Haddon Chambers' [1860-1921] *John-a-Dreams* and a woman ready to kill her unfaithful lover in Victorien Sardou's [1831-1908] *Fédora*, Campbell was offered roles which effectively typecast her in a mould of passion, rebellion and sexual impropriety.¹²⁶

This demonstrates the validity of Luckhurst and Moody's observation that '[a]lthough a notorious reputation may be recuperated, it may also become difficult to escape'.¹²⁷ Forbes-Robertson offered her a range of roles (discussed in depth in Chapter 4), but he too attempted to capitalise on her notoriety by continuing to cast her as a devious woman.

¹²³ 'The Trumpet Call', *Era*, 8 August 1891, p. 9.

¹²⁴ Peters, p. 64; Campbell, p. 79; Dent, (London: Museum Press, 1961), pp. 17-20.

¹²⁵ p. 68.

¹²⁶ Eltis, 'Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress' in *Theatre and Celebrity [...]*, pp. 169-188, pp. 176-7.

¹²⁷ (2005), p. 6.

Forbes-Robertson and Campbell opened the season on 21 September 1895 with *Romeo and Juliet* – a safe bet with a Lyceum audience used to Shakespearean spectacle. It ran for 79 performances so, following the commercial success with their opening production, Henry Arthur Jones (1851-1929) approached them to stage *Michael and His Lost Angel* (hereafter *Michael*). The play tells the story of a clergyman, Michael Feversham, who is torn between the love for his religion and love of a wealthy woman named Audrie who seduces him. The play opened at the Lyceum on 15 January 1896 and on the same day at the Empire Theatre in New York. A review of the US play in the *New York Times* was subtitled, ‘An interesting treatment of an old theme which will probably cause heated discussion and therefore be profitable’.¹²⁸ However, the play ran for only ten days at the Lyceum and its failure was largely attributed to Campbell having resigned her part as Audrie only days beforehand (Marion Terry filled in the role). In her autobiography Campbell reported, ‘I felt my part in this play was vulgar, and it did not interest me, but I said I would try and play it if some of the lines were cut’.¹²⁹ Jones refused to make the alterations and they quarrelled. The play was supposed to capitalise on a controversial theme (sex in religion) and Campbell’s success playing deviant women. Dent references a caricature from *Entr’acte* (1895) with the caption: ‘Do you think you would have done better with it, Forbes, if I had been your Lost Angel?’ with Campbell characterised as ‘distinctly beguiling’.¹³⁰ It was clearly thought that Campbell’s celebrity (or notoriety) would have brought more commercial value to the play.

As Chapter 4 illustrates, Forbes-Robertson gave Campbell several more opportunities to showcase her personality and abilities, most notably in Louis Napoleon Parker’s (1852-1944) translation of Hermann Sudermann’s (1857-1928) *Magda* in June 1896. He took the part of Pastor Heffterdingk – a somewhat minor role – while Campbell took centre stage as Magda. While he needed to capitalise on her celebrity, in this instance he sacrificed his own. Peters remarks that ‘she was unfailingly popular, the fascination of her person disarming criticism’.¹³¹ Shaw, in particular, was disappointed when the Forbes-Robertson-Campbell partnership ended (first in 1898 and then ultimately in 1899) as he had written *Caesar and Cleopatra* for them (discussed in detail in Chapter 4). He tried to get financial backing from the Lyceum Limited

¹²⁸ “‘Michael and His Lost Angel’ at the Empire Theatre’, *New York Times*, 16 January 1896, p. 5.

¹²⁹ p. 141.

¹³⁰ p. 126.

¹³¹ p. 132.

Company to invest in the production, arguing in a letter that ‘Forbes-Robertson & Mrs. Pat look more like heir & heiress apparent to Irving & Ellen Terry than any other pair’.¹³² The difference between the Forbes-Robertson-Campbell and the Irving-Terry partnerships was that Terry was willing to stand back and allow Irving to be the star, whereas Campbell was not prepared to allow Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity to overshadow her. Additionally, for Campbell to be a submissive partner would have conflicted with the fictional selves she depicted on stage. The difference between Terry and Campbell’s celebrity lay not in their private selfhood – Terry, after all, lived with Edward William Godwin (1833-1886) and had his children outside of marriage while Campbell’s private self had at least the façade of pertaining to codes of respectability – but in the on-stage roles. A celebrity could borrow notoriety or renown from another celebrity by appearing alongside them, but there was a delicate power balance in theatrical economics and this balance required a particular combination of subjectivities where a dominant star played the dominant fictional role.

Forbes-Robertson was the manager at the Lyceum (he would join Campbell in 1899 at the Prince of Wales, which was technically under her management) and he made the ultimate decisions regarding plays. ‘[H]er *manager!*’ scoffed Dent, ‘He was more like a shrinking lion-tamer outside and inside the cage of an untameable lioness’.¹³³ The reality was that some of the decisions Forbes-Robertson made to appease Campbell were most likely the result of the romantic affair between them. For example, Forbes-Robertson admitted that he added *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* to his European tour bill for her benefit.¹³⁴ Out of propriety neither of them drew attention to the relationship in their autobiographies, but Forbes-Robertson’s family acknowledge that there was a romantic relationship between them and Peters also provides evidence from their correspondence that reveal the relationship (such as correspondence between Forbes-Robertson and Campbell’s sister Lulo when Campbell was ill in 1897 ahead of the debut of *Hamlet*).¹³⁵

Unlike the rumour of the engagement to Anderson, which would benefit the reputation of both parties as they were (as far as their public was concerned) suitably matched, this later

¹³² Peters, p. 173.

¹³³ Dent, p.122.

¹³⁴ (1925), p. 173.

¹³⁵ Diana Forbes-Robertson, pp. 131-2; Peters, pp. 143-156.

rumour was potentially damaging to the reputations of both actors – Campbell was a married woman and her husband was working abroad. To have made public such an illicit relationship would likely have been commercially disastrous, although Peters determines that it was a very badly kept secret within the industry:

Forbes-Robertson's feelings for her could not be disguised. There was talk, and her fundamentally respectable nature recoiled. There was Pat, poor Pat. She still thought of herself as a wife and mother, a good girl brought up in Dulwich. She could not return Forbes's feelings openly, yet everyone knew that the lovers of *Romeo and Juliet* did not drop their roles offstage.¹³⁶

Peters reports that Campbell moved from Ashley Gardens to Mandeville Place in order to be closer to the Forbes-Robertson family home in Bedford Square, suggesting the affair was more than a fleeting fling, but, according to Diana Forbes-Robertson, Campbell toyed with his emotions and the romance ultimately collapsed. The ending of the relationship may have been the result of Campbell's difficult nature, or it may also have been the strains of performing together that ended the alleged affair. Peters defensively argues that Campbell was divided between her husband and Forbes-Robertson. While fighting in the Boer War, Patrick Campbell was shot and died on 5 April 1900 but, by this point, the partnership (business and personal) had dissolved. Jean Fostekew related that, following news of Patrick Campbell's death, Campbell's uncle had gone to Forbes-Robertson's family home to insist on them marrying but his mother 'saw him off'.¹³⁷ Their hidden relationship indicates the divide between notoriety and scandal. It was acceptable for Campbell to play 'fallen' women in a fictional on-stage role, but her relationship with another man while married would have been scandalous.

1.2.6 Engaging Gertrude Elliott

During Forbes-Robertson's professional and personal relationship with Campbell he learned the commercial value of celebrity. According to Peters, 'a typical Mrs. Campbell play was a star vehicle. [...] She had been right to break with Forbes, who needed an actress like Gertrude Elliott to complement his own acting. Stella [Campbell] needed to dominate'.¹³⁸ Forbes-Robertson's autobiography implies that he engaged Elliott as his leading lady on a whim having only met her once prior to their professional engagement. He was in Palermo when he received a message

¹³⁶ p. 120.

¹³⁷ *Blossom: A Biography of Mrs F. G. Miles* (Dorset: Cirrus, 1998), p. 26.

¹³⁸ pp. 204-5.

from Ian Robertson with a list of suggested leading ladies – actresses who were ‘quiet, gentle, lady-like temperament as unlike Stella Campbell as possible’.¹³⁹ Such a personality would highlight his own celebrity. His autobiography does not give the names of the other contenders, but he claims he had initially selected another actress who had experience in Shakespeare roles, but several days later he telegraphed that Elliott should be engaged instead:

I found that I was not taking the matter with that philosophic calm proper in an actor-manager, and the fact disturbed me. Suddenly to want a certain young lady with whom I was but very slightly acquainted, to be of my company seemed unreasonable under the circumstances.¹⁴⁰

Forbes-Robertson’s suggestion is that it was luck that brought Forbes-Robertson and Elliott together in an enduring professional and personal partnership.

The decision to engage Elliott may have been based on more practical reasoning. At the turn of the century, touring was proving to be a lucrative way of making money. On 30 May 1900, as Forbes-Robertson was debating suitable leading ladies, Irving returned to the UK from his sixth tour of the US which had lasted seven months. In 1899 a syndicate had taken over the lease of the Lyceum from Irving, installing him as leading actor and director, but his financial situation demanded that he operate long tours to recuperate his losses. With this in mind, it is possible that Forbes-Robertson was already thinking ahead towards a US tour. He may have recalled his own US touring experience with Anderson and remembered the hostility she faced for having a British company. As an American, Elliott might endear his cause to the American public. She was known in the US, having made her first stage appearance on 1 September 1894 in Oscar Wilde’s *A Woman of No Importance*. She had toured in New York State with the Coghlan Company after they engaged her sister, Maxine Elliott (1868-1940), who, refusing to leave Gertrude behind, secured her a position in the company. Maxine was a celebrity in the US and UK, increasingly so after her marriage to US comedian Nat Goodwin (1857-1919) in 1898. Elliott, therefore, had a balance of celebrity and personality to suit his own career goals. From the foundations of Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity (based on the beauty and Aestheticism of his pre-theatrical life) which evolved into him being typecast as a romantic lover, stories and gossip about the female celebrities he played alongside had contributed to that type. Despite the public interest in the occasion, their marriage took place in a private ceremony, but *The Sketch* still

¹³⁹ Diana Forbes-Robertson, p. 134.

¹⁴⁰ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 198.

hailed it ‘The Theatrical Wedding of the Year’.¹⁴¹ Elliott’s celebrity persona allowed Forbes-Robertson’s to dominate, but his image gained further respectability through their marriage and the births of their daughters (all reported on in the press).¹⁴²

1.3 Utilising the Media

Forging a public subjectivity is possible only if there is a public to receive and interpret that identity, and then only if there is a means of bringing the celebrity and the public into close proximity. The concept of public intimacy is one of the themes of Luckhurst and Moody’s *Theatre and Celebrity*, in which they use the concept as a way of deconstructing celebrity qualities. Joseph Roach argues that

A formula as oxymoronic as public intimacy may seem to be a purely modern and secular idea, but it is in fact rooted in traditional religious doctrine and, more deeply and lastingly, in popular religious feeling. Saints and martyrs must make themselves tangibly accessible to ordinary mortals even as they communicate with the divine. [...] Their images circulate widely in the absence of their persons.¹⁴³

Meanwhile, Felicity Nussbaum explains that for performers in the eighteenth century, creating public intimacy ‘involved performing within the public realm with the express intent to expose private matters and to generate affect around their own persons in order to kindle celebrity’.¹⁴⁴ Therefore, public intimacy was not new or peculiar to Forbes-Robertson’s period, but just like saints, martyrs, and eighteenth-century performers, Forbes-Robertson’s public required tangible access to his celebrity. This section explores two means of creating public intimacy utilised by Forbes-Robertson that were not available to the previous generation of celebrities (such as Phelps): the newspaper interview and the postcard.

In 1895, the year he went into management at the Lyceum, Forbes-Robertson featured heavily in the popular press. For instance, he was *Vanity Fair*’s man of the day on 2 May in an article in which Jehu Junior (pen-name of the founder of the magazine – Thomas Gibson Bowles

¹⁴¹ ‘The Theatrical Wedding of the Year’, *Sketch*, 26 December 1900, p. 362.

¹⁴² ‘Marriage of Mr. Forbes Robertson and Miss Gertrude Elliott’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 January 1901, p. 707; ‘The Mother of Little Miss Forbes-Robertson’, *Sketch*, 2 October 1901, p. 431.

¹⁴³ Joseph Roach, ‘Public Intimacy’ The Prior History of ‘It’, in *Theatre and Celebrity [...]*, pp. 15-30, p. 16.

¹⁴⁴ ‘Actresses and the Economics of Celebrity, 1700-1800’, in *Theatre and Celebrity [...]*, pp. 148-168, p. 150.

(1842-1922)) discusses his theatre achievements. Alongside the article is a caricature by Spy (pen-name of Leslie Ward (1851-1922)) entitled 'Forbie' – Forbes-Robertson's nickname used by his performer friends (Fig 1.5).¹⁴⁵ The article discusses Forbes-Robertson's ancestry, his art school background, his apprenticeship with Phelps and subsequent performances, his plans to go into management, and his ability to fence. Bowles alluded to the private identity of the celebrity: 'Painstaking, full of artistic conception, handsome, and an admirable elocutionist,' and 'he is an actor yet is he a modest fellow'. Such an article offered a streamlined image of the identity behind the on-stage performer; it regurgitated the list of attributes commonly associated with him, while the image portrayed a smart fashionable gentleman. It indicates that the public were interested in the celebrity life as much as they were interested in the lives of his on-stage characters.

¹⁴⁵ Jehu Junior, 'Men of the Day. No. 619', *Vanity Fair*, 2 May 1895, p. 287.



Fig 1.5: Caricature in *Vanity Fair* entitled 'Forbie' by Leslie Ward (1895).¹⁴⁶

Three months earlier on 24 February, Helen Cecelia Black (1838-1906) interviewed Forbes-Robertson for *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper* as part of a series titled 'Half-Hours with

¹⁴⁶ Leslie Ward, 'Forbie,' accompaniment to Jenu Junior, 'Men of the Day. No. 619', *Vanity Fair*, 2 May 1895, p. 287. Reproduced from the National Portrait Gallery, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portraitExtended/mw05377/Sir-Johnston-Forbes-Robertson>, NPG 3008.

Celebrities'.¹⁴⁷ While Black covered similar material to Bowles – his theatre career, his art education, and his heritage – Black's interview created a more intimate impression of the private self of Forbes-Robertson than Bowles's article. She vividly described his home in which the interview took place ('no more inviting retreat can be imagined than the great house'), the objects she nominated within his home ('The young actor is also a painter of no small merit and a collector of art treasures, as may be seen by the many valuable proofs [...] that hang in the wall'), and his physical body ('it cannot but strike you that the classical features, the tall, graceful build, the serenity yet gravity of the fair, broad brow, and the somewhat dreamy look in the dark-blue eyes').¹⁴⁸ The interview was therefore a means of conveying a celebrity identity to the public to create intimacy, but it belonged to a larger media movement.

After the sinking of *The Titanic* in 1912, the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* reported the death of William Thomas Stead (1849-1912) - editor of the *Pall Mall Gazette* from 1883 to 1889. Under his editorship, it reported, the *Pall Mall Gazette* 'had become the pioneer of what Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) called 'the new journalism.' Interviews with celebrities began to appear in its pages—a startling innovation for newspaper readers in the eighties'.¹⁴⁹ 'New journalism,' according to Arnold's famous criticism in 1887, was characterised by the inclusion of features such as the interview, discussion of celebrities, human-interest stories, and stylistic changes such as the addition of photographs and large headlines. Its fault, he claimed, was that this type of journalism was 'feather-brained'.¹⁵⁰ Richard Salmon evidences interviews as a defining feature of celebrity culture of the 1880s and 90s as interviews and a preoccupation with celebrity life became a feature of newspapers and magazines, such as the *World* and *The Strand*.¹⁵¹ Edmund Yates (1831-1894) is credited with being behind the first series of celebrity interviews in UK print media, a series called 'Celebrities at Home', published in the *World* newspaper from 1877

¹⁴⁷ The series began on 6 January 1895 with an interview of Marion Terry, (*Dictionary of Nineteenth-century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Gent: Academia Press, 2009), p. 5).

¹⁴⁸ Helen C. Black, 'Half-Hours with Celebrities', *Lloyd's Weekly Newspaper*, 24 February 1895, p. 8.

¹⁴⁹ 'Mr. W. T. Stead', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 17 April 1912, p. 7.

¹⁵⁰ Matthew Arnold, 'Up to Easter,' *Nineteenth Century*, XXI (May 1887), pp. 629-43, pp. 638-9.

¹⁵¹ 'Signs of Intimacy: The Literary Celebrity in the "Age of Interviewing"', *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 25(1), (1997), pp. 159-177, p. 159.

to 1879.¹⁵² Laurel Brake and Marysa Denmoor identify Helen C. Black (née Spottiswoode) as one of the earliest journalists to specialise in the celebrity interview. Her first article, ‘Celebrity at Home’, was an interview with Forbes-Robertson published in the *World* (date unknown but presumably before 1881 when she published her next series).¹⁵³ He was therefore one of the first celebrities to be interviewed in the British press and it would become central to his mediated celebrity at the end of the century.¹⁵⁴

In addition to Black’s 1895 interview, at least two more interviews of Forbes-Robertson were published in the same year. Baroness Von Zedlitz (1868-1937) wrote ‘Some Famous Stage Lovers No. 2. – A chat with Mr. Johnston Forbes-Robertson’ for *The Englishwoman* during the run of *King Arthur*.¹⁵⁵ *The Englishwoman*, then edited by Ella Hepworth Dixon (pen-name of Margaret Wynman (1857-1932)), identified itself as a ‘high class Illustrated Magazine Published Monthly’.¹⁵⁶ In September 1895, the month that *Romeo and Juliet* opened at the Lyceum, Forbes-Robertson was the feature of Harry How’s (pen-name of publisher and editor George Newnes (1851-1910)) ‘Illustrated Interviews. No. XLIII.—“The New Romeo and Juliet”’ in *The Strand*.¹⁵⁷ Newnes capitalised upon the concepts of new journalism and had no pretences about his journalistic intentions:

¹⁵² Brake and Denmoor, p. 57. See also: Troy J. Bassett, “‘A Characteristic Product of the Present Era’: Gender and Celebrity in Helen C. Black’s *Notable Women Authors of the Day* (1893)”, in *Women Writers and the Artifacts of Celebrity in the Long Nineteenth Century*, ed. by Ann. R. Hawkins and Maura C. Ives (UK and USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), pp. 151-168, p. 151.

¹⁵³ Bassett acknowledges her as one of the first interviewers but states that she started for the *Lady’s Pictorial* in 1881, but according to Brake and Denmoor she published her first interview on Forbes-Robertson in the *World* prior to her work for *Lady’s Pictorial*, (p. 5.)

¹⁵⁴ Boorstin identifies the first US interview in the *New York Herald* (16 April 1836) when James Gordon Bennett interviewed people involved in a murder case he was reporting on. The first interview of a public figure was on 13 July 1859 when Horace Greeley interviewed Brigham Young (religious and political leader in the USA) in Salt Lake City and published the exchange in *New York Tribune* (20 August 1859), (Boorstin, pp. 26-28).

¹⁵⁵ Baroness Von Zedlitz, ‘Some Famous Stage Lovers No. 2. – A chat with Mr. Johnston Forbes-Robertson’, *The Englishwoman*, 1895, pp. 115-[-?], Newspaper Cutting in M&M, BTC, [GB2649-MM-PA-FJO]. The article mentions that Lancelot is Forbes-Robertson’s latest role, which dates the article to between January and March 1895.

¹⁵⁶ Brake and Denmoor, p. 205.

¹⁵⁷ Harry How, ‘Illustrated Interviews. No. XLIII.—“The New Romeo and Juliet”’, *The Strand Magazine*, September 1895, in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/stream/TheStrandMagazineAnIllustratedMonthly/TheStrandMagazine1895bVol.XJul-dec#page/n263/mode/2up>, pp. 252-266.

There is one kind of journalism which directs the affairs of nations ... There is another kind of journalism which has no such great ambitions. It is content to plod on, year after year, giving wholesome and harmless entertainment to crowds of hardworking people, craving for a little fun and amusement. It is quite humble and unpretentious. This is my journalism.¹⁵⁸

In an attempt to appear respectable, Newnes targeted a family readership for *The Strand*, hence his emphasis on his journalism as a form of ‘wholesome and harmless’ entertainment.

In such interviews, a private conversation between two individuals is rendered public by a third party – the reader. However, journalists in the 80s and 90s were yet to define the parameters of the interview format. Salmon observes that, even at the end of the nineteenth century, ‘the interview remained an unsettled, convoluted form’.¹⁵⁹ Note, for example, that Black’s interview is reported in the second person and refers to Forbes-Robertson in the third (‘in the gloaming, you sit tête-à-tête over a friendly cup of tea with his mother’), although she does directly quote some of his recollections (“‘[*Dan ’l Druce*] was one of Gilbert’s happiest creations,” he remarks, thoughtfully’).¹⁶⁰ According to Brake and Denmoor, direct quotation was only commonly used towards the end of the century.¹⁶¹ Newnes oscillates between direct quotation and reported speech, but both Newnes and Von Zedlitz place themselves as the subject of the interview (‘I entered his study’/‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson told me that’/‘Although I have met Forbes Robertson on several occasions’).¹⁶² For the interviewers, the interview is a narrative of their experience of meeting a real person behind a celebrity. Newnes, for example, describes, ‘[Forbes Robertson] was engaged in turning over the pages of his diary. I lit a cigarette. One had only to contemplate the actor to realize the *Romeo*’.¹⁶³ Thus, Forbes-Robertson was an object of fascination for the interviewers to gaze upon.

The interview had a contradictory purpose; in highlighting the extraordinary nature of the celebrity self it encouraged the aura of celebrity immortality, while simultaneously emphasising the mundane aspects of life (cups of tea with his mother) or deconstructing celebrated

¹⁵⁸ Hulda Friederichs, *The Life of Sir George Newnes*, (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/lifeofsirgeorgen00frierich>, pp. 116-117.

¹⁵⁹ (1997), p. 175.

¹⁶⁰ p. 8.

¹⁶¹ p. 308.

¹⁶² Von Zedlitz, p. 115; How, p. 252.

¹⁶³ How, p. 253.

productions (identifying painting paraphernalia such as easels and paintbrushes), rendering the celebrity human and accessible to the public.¹⁶⁴ Von Zedlitz, for example, says, ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson has been gifted by Providence with a fine manly presence; picturesque and powerful he is in all his gestures’, while highlighting his ‘three years’ arduous study at the Royal Academy’.¹⁶⁵ She also tells her readers; ‘I will give his account of the turning point in his career, as far as I can remember it, in his words’.¹⁶⁶ The interviewee could choose what to disclose to the interviewer, but the interviewer had the ultimate decision about how to retell the interview and what to include and, thus, were part of the celebrity production process.

The interviewer contributed to the celebrity-manufacturing operation by consolidating celebrity qualities and associations. Two weeks prior to Black’s Forbes-Robertson interview, the same newspaper published another Black interview of Ellen Terry (10 February). Both interviews referenced the other so, despite being printed separately, they were written about the same time during the run of *King Arthur*. The interviews reinforced the romantic history between the two celebrities: Terry’s interview references the oil painting of her that hung in Forbes-Robertson’s studio, and Black wrote that ‘the Lancelot of “King Arthur” conversed about [Terry], and recalled one after another of her great histrionic triumphs’.¹⁶⁷ In Forbes-Robertson’s interview, Black wrote that she ‘came to a standstill’ when she noticed Terry’s portrait (‘[t]he firelight casts dancing shadows over it, and produces a strangely-living effect [...]. She seems to be peeping out of her furs, and to draw them closer round her, as she smiles down from her frame!’). Black declares Lancelot his ‘greatest triumph’ and asserts that the part could have been written for him, then reflects on the similarities with *Dan’l Druce, Blacksmith*. She claims, no one could ‘forget the tender grace and pathos of the two young lovers’ who, when Dorothy leans on her lover’s breast as they both declare their happiness, instilled ‘[d]elicious tears’ in audience and players.¹⁶⁸ Similarly, Von Zedlitz reports how he secured his first role: having met W. G. Wills on the street, ‘the thought suddenly occurred to him that *I* should *look* the part [of Chastelard], even if I

¹⁶⁴ Helen C. Black, ‘Half-Hours with Celebrities’, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 24 February 1895, p. 8.

¹⁶⁵ p. 118.

¹⁶⁶ p. 116.

¹⁶⁷ Helen C. Black, ‘Half-Hours with Celebrities,’ *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 10 February 1895, p. 8.

¹⁶⁸ Black, (24 February 1895), p. 8.

couldn't act it'.¹⁶⁹ The interviewers reinforce the idea that Forbes-Robertson's beauty underpinned his casting and his celebrity.

The Englishwoman used language to describe Forbes-Robertson that furthered the idea of him as a romantic lover to their female readership, such as Von Zedlitz's frequent use of the word 'love', (his 'love for the stage' or his 'first love' and 'old love' of painting and his 'beloved brush').¹⁷⁰ The article promotes Forbes-Robertson's reported good looks and makes close references to his eyes to illustrate her commentary: 'you plainly read in his eyes that his heart yearns towards another [profession]' and describes him telling her his stories 'with a far-off retrospective look in his eyes'.¹⁷¹ The image accompanying the text depicts a very soft-eyed Forbes-Robertson gazing into the distance (Fig 1.6), whereas the portrait in *The Strand* is in side-profile and therefore less focussed on the facial features than *The Englishwoman*'s (Fig 1.7). The angled view of Fig 1.6 is softer, and more gentle and feminine than the profile picture (Fig 1.7), which portrays an element of strength and masculinity. This illustrates that the journalists moulded the celebrity to suit their readership.

¹⁶⁹ p. 116.

¹⁷⁰ p. 115; p. 116.

¹⁷¹ p. 116.



Fig 1.6: Photograph of Forbes-Robertson accompanying his interview in *The Englishwoman* (1895).¹⁷²

¹⁷² Von Zedlitz, p. 115.



Fig 1.7: Photograph of Forbes-Robertson accompanying his interview in *The Strand Magazine* (1895).¹⁷³

The public desired to discover more about the private selves behind the celebrities, so interviews often took place in the celebrity's home. The home, Salmon maintains, was a 'domain

¹⁷³ How, p. 252.

of revelatory signs' as the possessions in an individual's home were mapped onto their identity.¹⁷⁴ Forbes-Robertson's interviewers revelled in detailing the possessions they came across in his residence and use the objects to furnish the personality of the celebrity. However, due to the anticipated nature of the interview, the objects *in situ* can also be read as part of a staged or manufactured performance. Therefore, the possessions are not signifiers of an individual's private identity but the projected ideals of the celebrity's persona. Von Zedlitz noted the paintings (mentioned above) and commented on the 'roomy old mansion, full of interesting relics and souvenirs of the past'.¹⁷⁵ Meanwhile, Newnes stated, 'It is [...] in his study upstairs that one begins the better to breathe the man' (see Figs 1.8, 1.9, and 1.10).¹⁷⁶ In addition to his art supplies and papers, Newnes noticed Forbes-Robertson's statuettes of saints, rosaries and crucifix beside a 'huge case of golf clubs'.¹⁷⁷ The religious icons direct the discussion towards his time at the Rouen presbytery, while the artwork prompts discussion of the celebrities to whom he had connections.

¹⁷⁴ (1997), p. 166.

¹⁷⁵ Von Zedlitz, p. 118.

¹⁷⁶ How, p. 252.

¹⁷⁷ How, p. 252.



Fig 1.8: Photograph of the study in Forbes-Robertson's house accompanying his interview in *The Strand Magazine* (1895).¹⁷⁸



Fig 1.9: Photograph of Forbes-Robertson's dining room accompanying his interview in *The Englishwoman* (1895).¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁸ How, p. 253.

¹⁷⁹ Von Zedlitz, p. 116.



Fig 1.10: Photograph of the drawing room in Forbes-Robertson's home accompanying his interview in *The Englishwoman* (1895).¹⁸⁰

Salmon explains that illustrating newspaper interviews with photographs of the home was a common feature of the period and a method of creating intimacy between the celebrity and the public. He expands:

In the 1890s, for example, it became increasingly viable (both technically and economically) to intersperse texts with photographs which were commissioned especially for the occasion [...] These photographic narratives provided a visual counterpart to the written text, in which the interviewer systematically explored the topography of the home.¹⁸¹

Black's interview is accompanied only by sketches, but Von Zedlitz's and Newnes's both feature photographs of the interior of Forbes-Robertson's home, in addition to photographs of him (the actor) and in various roles, as well as photographs of other associated celebrities (there are eleven photographs in *The Strand* article). For example, the photograph of his study (Fig 1.8) shows several religious artefacts, works of art, and books. In the images numerous works of art can be seen adorning the walls of the house and thus serve as a discussion-starter with the interviewer.

¹⁸⁰ Von Zedlitz, p. 118.

¹⁸¹ Salmon, p. 170.

The emergence of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity coincided with these changes in journalism. Journalists played a role in the celebrity-making process by projecting the aspects of a celebrity identity that best catered to their readers' tastes and the interview format allowed a level of public intimacy that meant that Forbes-Robertson's public could visualise vividly the (imagined) private self of the celebrity. The accompaniment of photographs – coded messages signifying aspects of an identity – enhanced the illusion and brought the public into close proximity with their celebrities. Photographs became fundamental to the consumption of celebrity at the end of the nineteenth century as the public forged relationships with celebrities through ephemera that featured their preferred celebrity's photograph. Moreover, the circulation of these images, once in the possession of the consumer, indicates the public's role in the creation of celebrity.

1.4 The Consumption of Celebrity: Postcards

Prior to the invention of photography, celebrity images circulated (for example in newspapers or on posters) in the form of paintings or sketches.¹⁸² However, as the photographs in the interviews above demonstrate, photography had the capacity to communicate a more intimate sense of self between the celebrity and the public. This was particularly important for a theatre celebrity who traded on the presence of their physical body on stage and, therefore, a recognisable appearance was paramount. Unfortunately, given the temporal lapse between Forbes-Robertson's time and the current era it is impossible to explore the public's assimilation of the celebrity via these interviews. However, newspapers were not the only source of photographs that contributed to celebrity culture. A private collection of thirty-four postcards featuring photographs of Forbes-Robertson has been assembled for this thesis. The messages written on these postcards provide a rare glimpse into how Forbes-Robertson's public consumed his celebrity – an analysis of which forms the remainder of this chapter.

The postcard, Beth Ann Guyunn explains, 'is a quintessential product of the nineteenth century'.¹⁸³ In 1840 the British Post Office introduced the penny postage stamp in the UK (flat

¹⁸² See, for example, McPherson's (2009) account of the importance of portraiture to the celebrity image of Sarah Siddons in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

¹⁸³ 'Postcard', in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol I*, ed. by John Hannavy (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 1162-1164, p. 1162.

rate regardless of distance per half ounce), which made sending post affordable and transferred the onus for payment from the recipient to the sender. The first UK correspondence card (a postcard where the address was written on one side and the message on the other) was sent in 1870, but it was not until 1 September 1894 that the Post Office allowed privately printed postcards with illustrations. It also reduced the price of sending a postcard to a halfpenny (and would not increase to a penny until 1918). According to Guyunn, 75 million halfpenny cards were posted in Britain in 1894, which would increase to 750 million by 1903.¹⁸⁴ In 1901 the population of Britain was approximately 40 million, which means that, on average, each person posted 18 postcards in 1903. In these early court size (4.5 by 3.5 inches) picture postcards the address was written on one side and the message and picture were on the other, so the images were small, but, by 1899, the Post Office adopted a maximum size of 5.5 x 3.5 inches. In 1902, some postcard manufacturers began to divide the back so that the message and address could be written on one side – the form in which they survive to the twenty-first century – which increased the available space for an image. The antecedents of the postcard were the *carte-de-visite* and the cabinet card. On 27 November 1854, a French photographer, André Adolphe Eugène Disdéri (1819-1889), patented the *carte-de-visite* – a small photograph (9 x 6cm (3.5 by 2.4 inches)) pasted onto a larger card. In the 1860s some collectors of the cards, which would often feature celebrity images, would arrange them in photograph albums.¹⁸⁵ The cabinet card, originated by F. R. Window of the London studio Window & Bridge in 1866, was larger (4.25 x 6.5 inches) than a *carte-de-visite*, so the photographer could be more creative with the space.¹⁸⁶ These were traded and gifted, rather than posted, so the dissemination of images was localised, whereas the postcard communicated the image and accompanying personal correspondence across the country and internationally.

Although a means for private communication, business could advertise on the halfpenny cards from the 1870s, but they were not picture postcards. By the 1890s, theatre companies began to advertise plays or upcoming tours on postcards and, occasionally, scenes from plays would be reproduced in studios and photographed to feature on postcards to encourage bookings. However, David Mayer explains that photographic postcards

¹⁸⁴ Guyunn, p. 1162.

¹⁸⁵ John Plunkett, 'Carte-de-Visite', in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol I*, [...], pp. 276-277, p. 276.

¹⁸⁶ William B. Becker, 'Cabinet Cards', in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol I*, [...], pp. 233-234.

were stocked by newsagents and stationers whose choices were influenced by notions of celebrity, notoriety, and shelf life, rather than by an awareness of what might be currently playing at local theatres. [...] The picture postcard represented a new phase of promotion, celebrity, and advertisement.¹⁸⁷

As a new phenomenon, postcards were distinctive to Forbes-Robertson's period and the buying, sending, receiving, and collecting of picture postcards became active ways of consuming theatrical celebrity. This is an instance that proves that it is more accurate to speak of a theatre celebrity's 'public', rather than 'fans' or 'audience', as it does not follow that every sender or recipient of a postcard had seen the celebrity perform or even desired to. Some of the postcards would have been collected regardless of the celebrity featured, but this, in turn, widened his or her public.

Of the collection of thirty-four postcards, five are undated and/or the postdate is indecipherable, one is dated 15 October 1912, and one is dated 22 January 1913. The remaining twenty-seven postcards are dated between 1902 and 1907. During this time Forbes-Robertson was in the USA from Autumn 1903 to Spring 1904, Spring 1905, and October to May 1907. He had a Spring season in London at the Lyric Theatre which continued at the New Theatre from April, and an Autumn season at the Scala Theatre in 1905, and, for most of 1906, he was touring the UK. This period is difficult to categorise as his extensive tours meant that he was not based in a single location for very long. However, it can be seen that, in the first decade of the 1900s, he was trying to expand the geographical reach of his celebrity.

The benefit of printing photographs of Forbes-Robertson on postcards was that his celebrity preceded him as his image was sent to locations even when he was unable to be physically present. It also had the benefit of fans advertising performances on behalf of the theatres. The sender of a postcard dated 15 October 1904 (Figs 1.11 and 1.12) writes only that 'He is in M'ster next week!' This postcard probably followed the notice in the *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser* of Forbes-Robertson's appearance at the Manchester Theatre Royal in *Mice and Men* and *The Light That Failed* for the week commencing 17 October. There was a small advert for the event on 10 October, but on 15 October it was included in the section 'Dramatic Gossip' where it observed that Forbes-Robertson's appearance was eagerly

¹⁸⁷ David Mayer, "Quote the Words to Prompt the Attitudes": The Victorian Performer, the Photographer, and the Photograph', *Theatre Survey*, 3(2), 2002, 223-251, <doi:10.1017/S0040557402000121>, p. 247.

anticipated, as he had not appeared there in three years.¹⁸⁸ Similarly, the postcard dated 15 October 1912 (Fig 1.13) features an advertisement for the final visit of Forbes-Robertson to the Prince of Wales Theatre in Birmingham from 14 October. Thus, postcards could be used as publicity material to promote upcoming performances.



Fig 1.11: Front of postcard dated 15 October 1904.

¹⁸⁸ 'Theatre Royal, Next Week', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 10 October 1904, p. 1; and 'Dramatic Gossip', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 15 October 1904, p. 9.

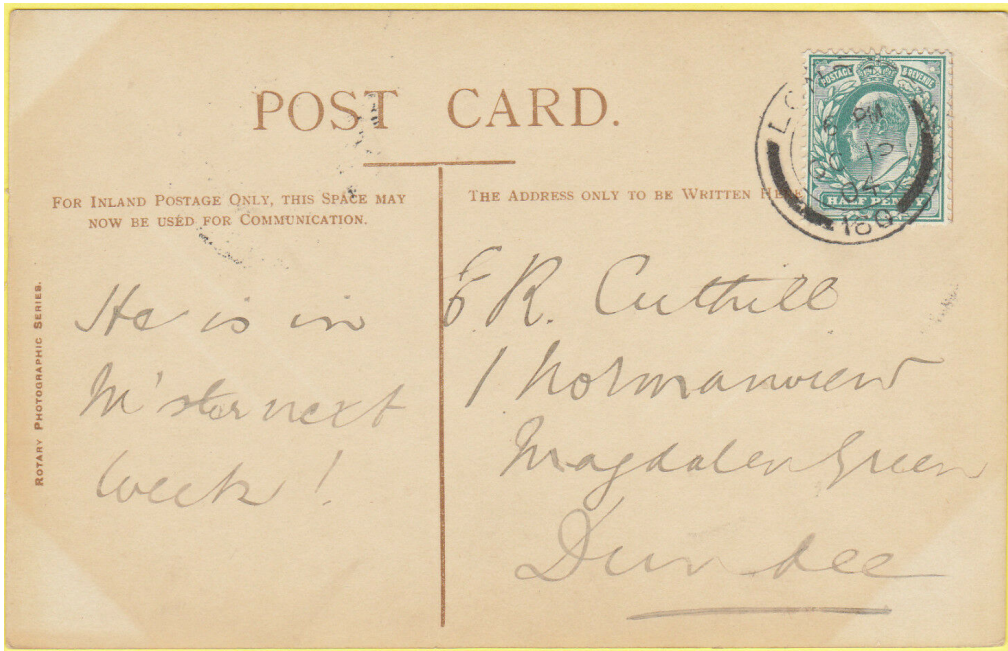


Fig 1.12: Back of postcard dated 15 October 1904.

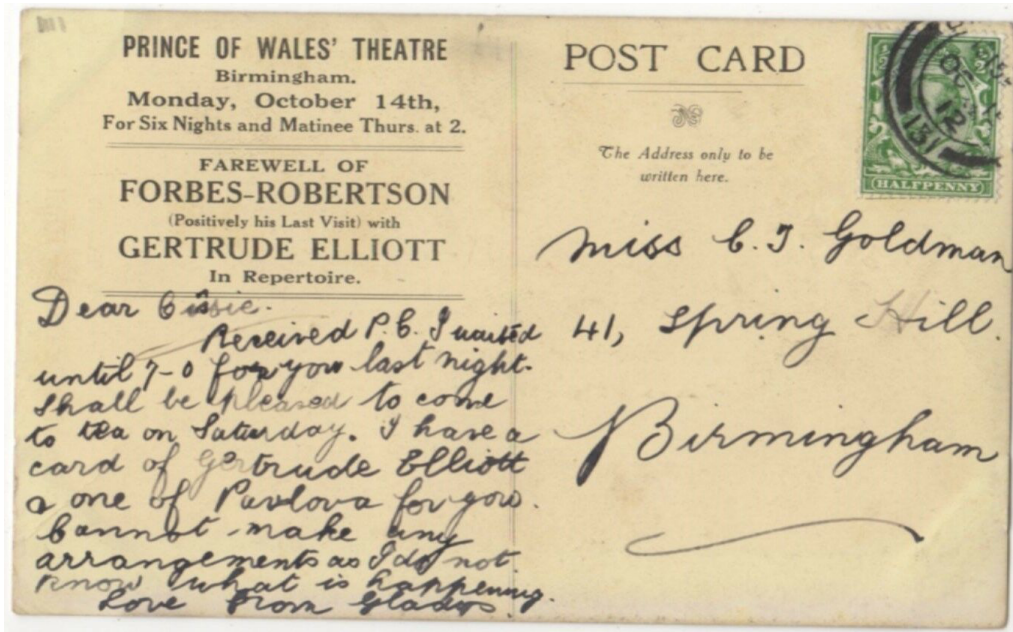


Fig 1.13: Back of postcard dated 15 October 1912.

The senders' postcard messages signal ways that the public consumed Forbes-Robertson's celebrity. Twenty of the postcard notes make no reference to the photograph of him on the front, although the senders of two of them make reference to plays. The sender of one postcard (26 October 1906) tells its recipient that she is going to see *King of Cadonia* that evening. The sender of the postcard dated 10 February 1902 advises Miss Lilian Bagley that 'Toreador is very good.

No matinee on Wednesday’ (Fig 1.14). The senders of these postcards had an active relationship with the theatre. They were theatregoers, using theatre-related merchandise to advise their friends on plays to see, and thus the postcards offer an insight into the profile of an audience member. The week the second postcard was sent, *Toreador* was playing at the Gaiety Theatre (and ‘F.L.V’ was correct: the matinee was on Saturday, not Wednesday). *Toreador* was a two-act musical comedy by James Tolman Tanner (1858-1915) and Harry Nicholls (1852-1926). The suggestion from the postcard is that ‘F.L.V’ was a patron of both musical comedies and an admirer, in some capacity, of Forbes-Robertson. The sender posted the postcard from Stoke Newington to Stamford Hill (see Fig 1.15), approximately half a mile apart, and the Gaiety Theatre was approximately five miles from Stamford Hill and just over four miles from Stoke Newington, which gives an indication as to the distance people were willing to travel to see a ‘very good’ play.¹⁸⁹ Bagley can be found on the 1901 Census living at the same address, and therefore approximately sixteen years old when she received the postcard. Her father, Edmund, is registered as a meat salesman.¹⁹⁰ The Miss C. J. Goldman who was the recipient of the 15 October 1912 postcard (above) belonged to a family of tailors.¹⁹¹ E.R. Cuthill (recipient of the 15 October 1904 postcard) is Edmund Cuthill – a clerk who would have been eighteen at the time of receiving the postcard.¹⁹² Janet Caw, recipient of the 6 February 1904 postcard (discussed below) was a teacher and the daughter of Lewis Caw, ‘Messenger at Arms & Sheriff Officer’.¹⁹³ These samples suggest that Forbes-Robertson’s public who sent and received postcards included tradespeople, or emerging professionals.

¹⁸⁹ The distances are based upon present estimations and are therefore approximate, as it does not account for changes in roads over time.

¹⁹⁰ Census. 1901. England. Hackney, London, Edmund Bagley household; RG13/211, ED. 7, p. 74. <http://ancestry.co.uk>: accessed 25 March 2019.

¹⁹¹ Census. 1911. England. Birmingham, Warwickshire, Henry Goldman household; RG14, PN 18054, RD 384, SD All Saints, ED. 22, SN 41. <http://ancestry.co.uk>: accessed 25 March 2019.

¹⁹² Census. 1901. Scotland. Dundee, St Andrew, Cuthill household; ED. 17, p. 5, line. 21, Roll CSSCT1901_100. <http://ancestry.co.uk>: accessed 25 March 2019.

¹⁹³ Census. 1901. Scotland. Edinburgh, Midlothian, Lewis Caw household; ED. 101, p. 7, line. 8, Roll CSSCT1901_389. <http://ancestry.co.uk>: accessed 25 March 2019.



Fig 1.14: Front of postcard dated 10 February 1902.



Fig 1.15: Back of postcard dated 10 February 1902.

Some of the postcards were clearly sent to people who collected postcards. The sender of a July 1904 postcard writes, 'I cannot get the one I wanted but, will this do to go on with'. The postcard pictured in Fig 1.16 (date illegible) reads, 'Hope you have not this' and the postcard dated 15 October 1912, discussed above (Fig 1.13), includes, 'I have a card of Gertrude Elliott & one of Pavlova for you'. In these cases, the celebrity value of Forbes-Robertson was as part of a collection – his value was in belonging to a group of celebrities whose photographs were chosen to be reprinted on postcards, rather than for his own individual identity. Another postcard dated 3 January 1904 says, 'This is the only card of Forbie I could get, hope you haven't one like it. Bob' (Fig 1.17). In this instance, the recipient appears to have a particular interest in the celebrity of Forbes-Robertson. More revealing is Bob's use of 'Forbie' – the nickname used for him by his theatre friends originating from those at the Garrick Club.¹⁹⁴ This displays a level of intimacy that would suggest that the recipient has a particular interest in this individual celebrity.

¹⁹⁴ Lowell Thomas, *Adventures Among Immortals* (London: Hutchinson, 1938), p. 122.



Fig 1.16: Front of postcard, date illegible.



Fig 1.17: Front of postcard dated 3 January 1904.

Seven of the postcards in the collection were addressed to Miss Ida Stace at 339 Albany Road, Camberwell between 1903 and 1906. The 1901 Census records that Stace was nineteen and a school governess, the address is a public house, and the licensee and mother of Stace, Elizabeth Stace, is the head of the family.¹⁹⁵ The cards make no reference to any plays, but again, there is a level of intimacy that suggests that Stace (and her friends) were fans of Forbes-Robertson and followers of his activity. One from 1906 (Fig 1.18) states, ‘Intensely melancholy isn’t it, Hope for Gertudes [*sic*] sake he’s more cheerful in Switzerland!’ The photograph on the

¹⁹⁵ Census. 1901. England. Camberwell, London, Elizabeth Stace household; RG13/516. ED. 9. P. 34. <http://ancestry.co.uk>: accessed 25 March 2019.

front depicts Forbes-Robertson in *For the Crown* (Fig 1.19), although this information is not printed on the postcard and the sender (Edith) does not refer to it. Forbes-Robertson and Elliott did, in fact, take a holiday to Switzerland over Christmas 1906 and the fact that Edith was aware of this, with the assumption that Stace was also aware of it, illustrates the interest that these women took in the celebrity's life.¹⁹⁶

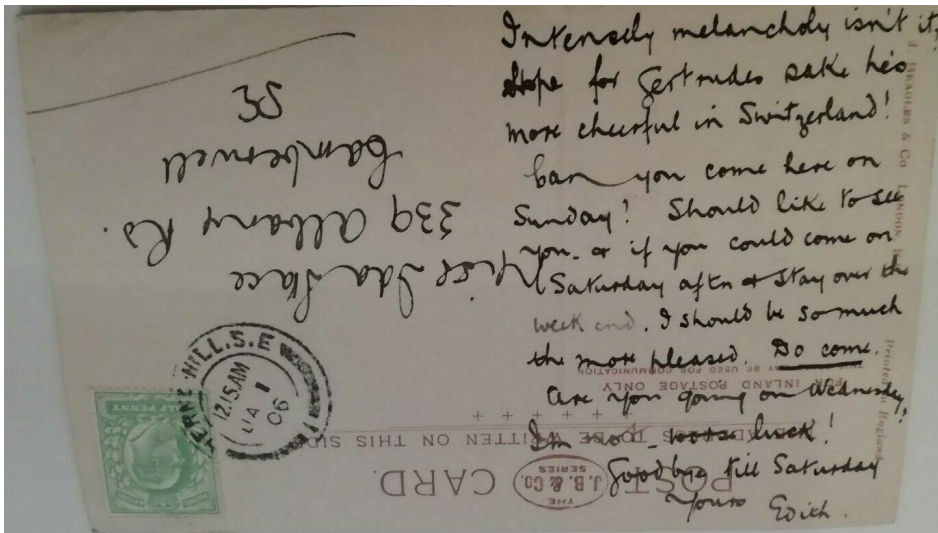


Fig 1.18: Back of postcard dated January 1906.

¹⁹⁶ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 243.



Fig 1.19: Front of postcard dated January 1906.

Two more postcards to Stace, one from Edith and another from ‘E.G.G’ (who may be Edith), both from 1903, exemplify how Forbes-Robertson was the subject of the female gaze. The first writes: ‘He’s certainly not looking his best here, but he would like to wish you “many happy returns”’ (Figs 1.20), and the second: ‘I’m rather gone on this photo of Forbes. Do you like it? Love Edith’ (Figs 1.21 and 1.22). Similarly, the sender of a postcard (unknown date) sent to Mrs N. G. Martell asks, ‘Is he to your taste?’ (Fig 1.23), while the sender of a card dated 6 February 1904 to Miss J. Caw writes, ‘No doubt you will like this “mannie” as well. I rather think you will like him’ (Figs 1.24 and 1.25). These writers emphasise Forbes-Robertson’s physical appearance and illustrate the importance of his beauty to his celebrity persona.



Fig 1.20: Front of postcard dated (unknown) 1903.



Fig 1.21: Back of postcard dated 31 December 1903.



Fig 1.22: Front of postcard dated 31 December 1903.



Fig 1.23: Front of postcard (unknown date) addressed to Mrs N G Martell.

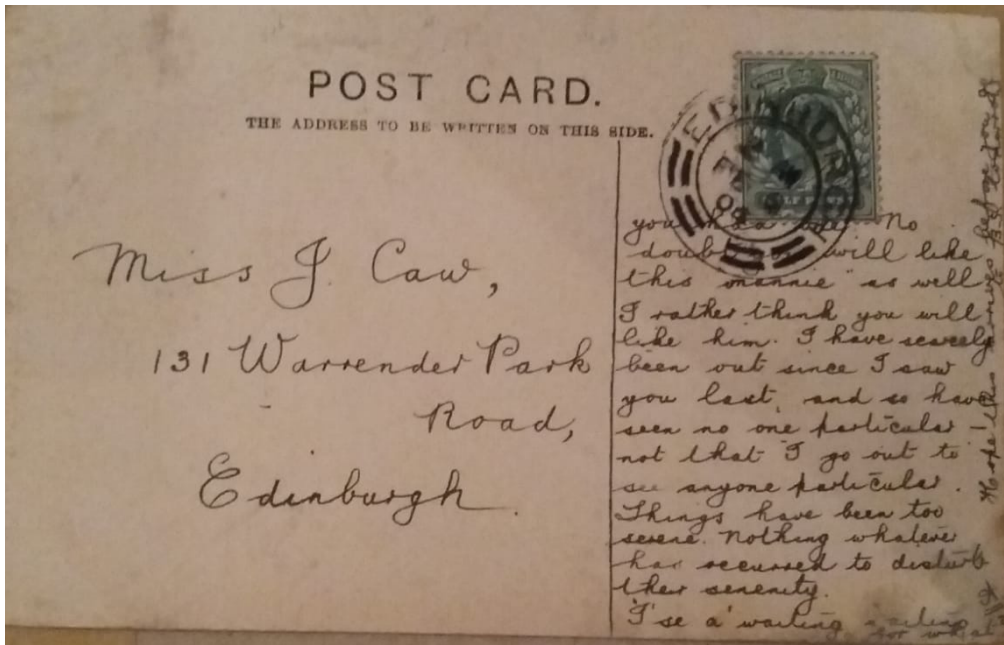


Fig 1.24: Back of postcard dated 6 February 1904.



Fig 1.25: Front of postcard dated 6 February 1904.

These senders and recipients of the postcards indicate how they consumed Forbes-Robertson's celebrity. For some, it was his role in the theatre that appealed while for others it was his life as a celebrity (his holidays and marriage) that was of general interest. For some of the writers he was the focus of sexual objectification to be gazed upon. Forbes-Robertson had to appeal to these distinct groups in order to maintain his position and so, his consumers take a role in the creation of celebrity as he responds to their preferences.

1.5 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrates that Forbes-Robertson's celebrity did not emanate from his overwhelming charisma, but multiple individuals and industries interacted to create it. The process to create a theatre celebrity involved several stages, but it started with an individual with his/her private self. As Collingwood observed, Forbes-Robertson 'possessed all the physical qualities that go to the making of a successful actor. His features were strikingly handsome, his figure well formed, his gesture magnificent, and his voice melodious to a marked degree'.¹⁹⁷ These inherent qualities were imperative to the impression he made on stage, and managers could match roles to aspects of the actor's private self. A positive reception from audiences or reviewers meant that the manager was likely to cast the actor in similar roles again and so the actor gains experience and competence in performing the type. However, a successful theatre actor is not, necessarily, also a celebrity. The chapter conveys the idea that celebrity is an interactive phenomenon. Forbes-Robertson's celebrity did not appear in isolation, but borrowed and acquired meaning from other art and theatre celebrities, creating a level of intertextuality that pervaded public individuals. His membership within the aesthetic art scene allowed reviewers to take note of him from an early stage and his (alleged and real) romantic attachments provided speculation, intrigue, and exposure for his brand.

In order to become known beyond his theatre audiences, he required the media industries (newspapers, in particular) to communicate this brand to the public, and this public to promote his desirable traits with a level of consistency to create a stable subjectivity. At the end of the nineteenth century the emergent reading public desired access to their celebrities and insight into their lives. This resulted in new forms of journalism, such as the interview with illustrations or photographs. However, the journalists were not simply mouthpieces for the upcoming celebrity nor were they obliged to keep to a set script. Forbes-Robertson's early interviewers record their own experiences with the celebrity and promote the traits they deem most attractive. Most notably the celebrity self could be moulded to suit the readership of a particular magazine or newspaper which had the potential of widening a celebrity's public. Naturally, if the public were not interested in the celebrity (or the traits that the newspaper chose to highlight) they did not

¹⁹⁷ p. 10.

have to buy the magazine or newspaper and the upcoming celebrity would not prosper. In this sense the public has the ultimate judgement about which celebrities achieve great acclaim.

The analysis of the messages on the postcards evidences the multiple ideas about Forbes-Robertson's celebrity that reached his public – his beauty, his theatricality, and an enviable lifestyle. The discussions of Forbes-Robertson's private life and activity on the postcards prove that there was an intimacy between a celebrity and his/her public and a celebrity had different meanings for members of the public. The celebrity brand with its associated meanings are a reproduction of ideas between celebrity, industry, and public. As an actor, Forbes-Robertson's celebrity had further layers of subjectivity from the fictional characters he played on stage. The next chapter considers how the role that solidified his theatrical reputation – Hamlet – allowed him to become a celebrity.

Chapter 2. Hamlet: a Brand and a Ghost

‘Well, after all, there is only one “greatest part,” and that is Hamlet.’
–Forbes-Robertson, 1909¹

2.1 Introduction

The cartoon in Fig 2.1 appeared in *Punch* magazine in March 1926, a year after Forbes-Robertson published his autobiography *A Player Under Three Reigns*.² He was an actor during the reigns of Queen Victoria (1819-1901), Edward VII (1841-1910), and George V (1865-1936), but, as the cartoon and its accompanying verse illustrates, the title plays on the word ‘reign’ which actually alludes to the theatrical reigns of ‘Three Kings of Art’. In the cartoon, a confident and self-assured giant Forbes-Robertson with a puffed-up chest dominates the centre while the ‘Kings of Art’ look on at him from the background – two are faint sketches of ghostly figures and a third is a full figure standing in his looming shadow. These peripheral characters are relics of theatre history – the ghostly figures are Phelps and Irving (both, by this time, deceased) and the third figure is Squire Bancroft (who was still alive but was 84 years old and so infirm that he would die within a month of this cartoon being printed). They appear to be scrutinising Forbes-Robertson, possibly enviously, while the rhyme describes him as their ‘peer’.³ The suggestion is that, despite being their protégé, Forbes-Robertson has risen and surpassed them in status. The cartoon also signifies the influence that these mentors had on his succession; their presence metaphorically haunts him.

¹ ‘How I Created My Greatest Part’, *Delineator*, v. 73, January-March 1909, <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/osu.32435065936825>, pp. 94-95.

² His autobiography went on sale in the last week of March 1925 at 21s (equivalent to £58.82 in 2018), (‘Famous Actors’ Memories’, *Stage*, 26 March 1925, p. 24).

³ The rhyme also caricatures Forbes-Robertson’s stereotype as a stage lover for having kissed and wooed Queens of Beauty on the stage, and the suggestion that he has ‘kept a list’ probably alludes to the mention of his leading ladies in his memoirs.



MR. PUNCH'S PERSONALITIES.

XI.—SIR JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON.

THREE Kings of Art he served, and now, their peer,
 He wears his crown on brows serene and sage.
 You'd never guess, to see him so austere,
 How many Queens of Beauty (on the stage)
 Those lips have wooed and kissed;
 But he has fold us, having kept a list.

Fig 2.1: Cartoon in *Punch* alluding to the three reigns under which Forbes-Robertson served (1926).⁴

Forbes-Robertson's predecessors inscribed marks on his public persona and image. The theatre critic, Henry Chance Newton, for instance, argued that

⁴ Bernard Partridge, 'Mr. Punch's Personalities', *Punch*, 3 March 1926, p. 249.

the only actor at present on our stage who has caught Samuel Phelps's rapt intellectual earnestness, and, above all, his rich, rolling tones, is Forbes-Robertson. [...]

[A]lthough Mr. Forbes-Robertson's physique and face are more delicate and refined than Phelps's, his face—and especially his mouth and lower jaw—often bring back Phelps's visage to me.⁵

For Newton, Phelps did more than influence Forbes-Robertson's performance style. The idea that Forbes-Robertson's face 'bring[s] back Phelps's visage' suggests that Forbes-Robertson embodied Phelps's spectre as if he was possessed by him. When Forbes-Robertson played Shylock in *Merchant of Venice*, *The Era* noted that the 'cloak worn by Tubal in Forbes-Robertson's production of the play was formerly worn by Samuel Phelps, and was given to Mr. Forbes-Robertson by his old master'.⁶ The passing on of costume indicates an inheritance from one generation of actors to another. It suggests an afterlife for the performer and gives the object (item of costume/prop) a spiritual significance. Forbes-Robertson promoted these associations throughout his career, and are prominent in his memoirs.⁷ In Phelps he found 'a gentle, kind, and considerate tutor' who talked him through his parts and whose 'dignity of mind, [...] high ideals, [...] pride in his calling, [...] contempt for wire-pullers, left a lasting impression'.⁸ Forbes-Robertson acknowledges his fortune of receiving the early intervention by a reputable practitioner of Shakespearean drama and highlights the heritage that this places him in:

[Phelps] had been Macready's favourite actor. Macready had played with Mrs. Siddons, and she had played with Garrick, so that I may boast of a good histrionic pedigree, and I confess to pride at being a link with the great past of my calling'.⁹

He created legitimacy through his association with Phelps and his historical connections to other notable performers.

If Phelps loaned his theatrical heritage to Forbes-Robertson's celebrity, Bancroft loaned him respectability. Forbes-Robertson credited the Bancrofts for bringing respectability to the theatre profession on and off stage – he praised them for their 'successful' and 'admirable management' and for the physical changes to the theatre buildings. He confessed that, at the Bancrofts' Prince of Wales Theatre, there was 'an entirely different atmosphere from other

⁵ 'Phelps and Charles Warner', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 March 1913, p. 7.

⁶ 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 3 May 1913, p. 12.

⁷ See, for example, 'The Real Forbes-Robertson', *Era*, 8 March 1913, p. 19.

⁸ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 68-70.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 69.

theatres in London [...]. Every consideration was shown the actor'.¹⁰ While the theatre-going public respected Bancroft and Phelps, Irving's celebrity status surpassed the other actors and Forbes-Robertson's publicity material made use of this. Forbes-Robertson expresses gratitude to Irving throughout the memoirs; Irving overpaid Forbes-Robertson for a commissioned painting of the Church Scene in his 1882 revival of *Much Ado About Nothing* (see Fig 2.2), and demonstrated that he had 'no rack-renting spirit' about him when he sub-let the Lyceum to Forbes-Robertson at the same rent it cost himself.¹¹

Forbes-Robertson took the credit for having arranged with his brother Norman, for Irving's ashes to be interred at Westminster Abbey following his death in 1905. The 'event' showed traces of stage pageantry, as lines of people appeared to see the cortège on its way to the Abbey. Forbes-Robertson was one of his twelve pall-bearers and, he later claimed, that 'the funeral ceremony was the most touching and impressive of any that had taken place in the Abbey within living memory. Vast crowds filled the whole edifice even to the triforium. Many of the leading players acted as stewards' and the occasion was a self-reflexive homage to Irving's theatrical status.¹² With the passing of Irving there was an opening for a leader of the British theatre and, through his involvement and visibility at Irving's funeral, Forbes-Robertson appears to have offered himself as a willing replacement. 'At his first performance of *Hamlet* at the Lyceum [11 September 1897],' Donaldson asserted in 1970, 'Forbes-Robertson was everywhere acclaimed the greatest Hamlet of his day. He took over that night the mantle from Henry Irving and wore it until he passed it in turn to Sir John Gielgud'.¹³ Correspondingly, Trussler (1994) asserts that Forbes-Robertson is '[g]enerally recognized as the inheritor of Irving's mantle'.¹⁴ Evidence that this belief was held at the time is easily identifiable. *The Folkestone Express* asserted in 1906 that 'Forbes-Robertson has, no doubt, inherited much of the Irving spirit' while, following his 1913 performances at the Theatre Royal, Portsmouth, the manager came out to thank Forbes-Robertson for making history and 'provid[ing] a notable link with the last visit of Sir Henry Irving'.¹⁵ This

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 92.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 126; p. 165.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 237-238. The other pall-bearers were Bancroft, Hare, Pinero, Alma Tadema, Alexander Mackenzie, Tree, Alexander, Wyndham, Professor Dewar, Lord Aberdeen, and Lord Tennyson.

¹³ p. 131.

¹⁴ p. 262.

¹⁵ 'A Portrait of Forbes-Robertson', *Folkestone Express*, 28 February 1906, p. 4; and 'Mr. Forbes-Robertson', *Portsmouth Evening News*, 24 February 1913, p. 5.

chapter evidences Irving's major influence on Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet* and also illustrates how Forbes-Robertson worked to embed the ghost of Irving onto his own celebrity which, as Trussler's claim shows, continues to haunt the memory of him.



Fig 2.2: 'The Church Scene in Much Ado about Nothing by William Shakespeare' by Forbes-Robertson (1884).¹⁶

When Forbes-Robertson first tackled the role of Hamlet in 1897 at the age of forty-four, he was already an established actor and his celebrity widely known, but this was the play that 'made' him. By 1913 Forbes-Robertson had been intermittently playing the role for 16 years and the play possessed sufficient merit that it should be preserved on film (or to have sufficient cultural capital that it would be easily marketable and promised large financial returns).

Following the opening performance of *Hamlet* at the London Farewell Season in Drury Lane on 22 March 1913, the London correspondent to the *Western Daily Press* opined that

[i]t was a wise thing to open the season [...] with Shakespeare's sublime tragedy, and nothing could be more fitting than that when the time comes the final curtain should be

¹⁶ Oil paint on canvas, *The Players* (New York), <http://www.theplayersnyc.org/artwork> [accessed 21 April 2019].

rung down upon the same scholarly presentment. For it is as Hamlet that Mr Forbes Robertson will live in the memory of many theatregoers.¹⁷

As this chapter illustrates, the correspondent was correct; Forbes-Robertson's primary legacy was as a great Hamlet of his age. Esslin asserts in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre* (2001) that he was 'the outstanding Hamlet of his generation'.¹⁸ The role of Hamlet became another of Forbes-Robertson's ghosts but, in turn, his Hamlet haunts the future actors of the role. For example, Michael A. Morrison observes that commentators on the Hamlet of American actor, John Barrymore (1922), drew comparisons between him and Forbes-Robertson with some even suggesting that they looked similar.¹⁹ This is reinforced by Gielgud's (1991) claim that Forbes-Robertson attended one of Barrymore's rehearsals in 1922, 'presumably to tender his advice'.²⁰ Similarly, Buchanan (2005) describes that, while filming *Hamlet* in 1996, Derek Jacobi (Claudius, 1938-) gifted Kenneth Branagh (Hamlet, 1960-) a copy of an acting edition of *Hamlet* whose ownership could be traced back to Forbes-Robertson. She details,

In each generation since Forbes-Robertson, this volume had been entrusted into the care of an actor whose Hamlet performance had achieved some distinction. Since *Hamlet* is considered the supreme actor's play, the bestowing of the Forbes-Robertson edition inevitably became a sign of privileged election among actors.²¹

Just as Irving haunted Forbes-Robertson's production, so Forbes-Robertson haunted these future productions. This chapter therefore focuses on how Forbes-Robertson appropriated Irving's influence to craft his Hamlet and how he tethered the character of Hamlet to his own celebrity brand.

2.2 Hauntology

Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin (2014) state that '[e]very actor has a ghost story, just as all theatre spaces have their ghosts'.²² They oscillate between speaking of 'real' ghosts (that haunt physical spaces) and metaphorical ghosts (for example, those that remind audiences of previous

¹⁷ 'London Letter', *Western Daily Press*, 24 March 1913, p. 5.

¹⁸ Brown, p. 372.

¹⁹ *John Barrymore: Shakespearean Actor* (Cambridge: UP, 1997), p. 220; Walter Hampden, *Vogue*, 15 January 1923, pp. 54-55.

²⁰ John Gielgud, *Shakespeare – Hit or Miss?* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1991), p. 33.

²¹ *Shakespeare on Film* (Harlow: Longman-Pearson, 2005), p. 1.

²² Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin, 'Introduction: Theatre and Spectrality', in *Theatre and Ghosts: Materiality, Performance and Modernity*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin, (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 1-26, p. 3.

actors in character roles, or the previous character roles of actors). The connotations of the cartoon reproduced in Fig 2.1, along with the long-term influences discussed above, direct a study of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity towards a discussion of the ghosts of his celebrity. The theoretical approach of hauntology, inspired by Jacques Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, is therefore an appropriate framework for this chapter.²³ Hauntology theories can be applied to a number of disciplines to deconstruct the creation of character or atmosphere, for instance, the intertextuality in a book or a physical ghostly presence at a heritage site. In celebrity and theatre studies, theories of hauntology explore the ghosts behind a public persona and the roles that they play, in addition to the haunting of theatres by previous actors or performances. The idea of ghosts, figurative or literal, also relates to the way 'things' (a person, a play, a place, a performance) are remembered and immortalised. Roach observed that when a performer retires, resigns, or dies, younger performers replace them, and their

performances then constitute rites of memory in honor of the artificially superannuated. Into the professional and social places they once occupied step the anxious survivors, who now feel obliged more or less to reinvent themselves, taking into account the roles played by their predecessors.²⁴

The 'surrogate' performer, as he terms it, creates a new self but reminders of the previous performers remain attached to it. In this respect, a performance is an effigy perpetuating cultural ideas through the surrogate.²⁵

The idiosyncrasies of the concept of hauntology as it pertains to stage performances, Carlson posits, lie in the reception, interaction, and interpretation of an audience who view performances with memories of previous theatre experiences.²⁶ The audience's interpretation is influenced by the haunted quality of a theatrical text (with memories of the previous performances of the text), body (which has played in other fictional roles and has an off-stage persona), production (that may have been on display elsewhere or at another time), and house (that has exhibited other productions). Similarly, Alice Rayner considers the unique position of the theatre to perform a memorial or to resurrect something lost to death. For Rayner, the paradox of the on-stage presence of something lost renders the performer a ghost wearing 'a human,

²³ Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994).

²⁴ *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York and Chichester: Columbia UP, 1996), p. 1.

²⁵ p. 36.

²⁶ *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Michigan: UP, 2003), p. 5.

living mask'.²⁷ Audiences can see hauntings in a performer's body in different ways. The image of a performer in a previous role has implications for the reception of the same performer in a new role, as audiences are 'conditioned by inevitable memories of this actor playing similar roles in the past'.²⁸ This leads to typecasting and, as Carlson observes, was evident in the nineteenth century British stock system where each company had a leading man, a leading woman, a villain, and a fool. When a performer who has achieved celebrity status and has a well-known public persona plays in a new role, the celebrity also haunts the fictive character. In this sense, the audience may have difficulty dissociating what they know about the celebrity from the character s/he is playing. When an actor is playing a role that has been essayed recently, the previous performances also haunts the new one as viewers and critics draw comparisons between them.

Hamlet occupies a central position in the ideas of hauntology, which stems from Derrida's metaphorical harnessing of *Hamlet*. Derrida uses Hamlet's claim that 'time is out of joint' to approach the theory that Marxist ideas haunted Europe over a hundred years after Karl Marx (1818-1883) wrote them; the ghost of Hamlet's father, after all, instigates and steers Hamlet's actions (or inactions). Carlson asserts that it is 'the density of its ghosting' – through previous performances and performers across history and cultures – that inspires actors, like Forbes-Robertson in 1897, to perform *Hamlet*.²⁹ Irving's Hamlet haunted Forbes-Robertson's from its inception to the final performance and even through its transferral to the medium of film. Irving's ghost did not just haunt Forbes-Robertson's embodiment of the character of Hamlet, as he also influenced the mise-en-scène. Success with the role meant that *Hamlet* then haunted Forbes-Robertson's celebrity persona, and subsequently haunted his future roles. This chapter deconstructs the craft of Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet* by tracing how Forbes-Robertson hinged Hamlet to his celebrity identity and, in doing so, reveals the various ghosts that haunted him and how he appropriated them to contribute to this identity.

²⁷ Alice Rayner, *Ghosts: Death's Double and the Phenomena of Theatre* (Minneapolis and London: UP, 2006), p. 61.

²⁸ Carlson, p. 58.

²⁹ p. 79.

2.3 *Hamlet* at the Lyceum in 1897

Forbes-Robertson first played *Hamlet* in 1897, with Campbell as Ophelia, at the Lyceum. *Sporting Life* summarised the feelings of the public that ‘[s]ooner or later it was bound to come, and the only wonder is that it did not come earlier’.³⁰ Beatrice Forbes-Robertson asserted that he should have opened his first Lyceum season in 1895 with *Hamlet*, but he chose *Romeo and Juliet* for Campbell’s benefit as Juliet was a better part for her than Ophelia.³¹ In his memoirs, Forbes-Robertson credits Irving and Terry with inspiring him to take on the role: ‘When talking with [Irving] on the subject of a piece [to perform], he said, “Play *Hamlet*.” [He replied,] “Do you really mean that?” “Yes, and I will lend you the scenery and the properties.”’. To counter Forbes-Robertson’s concern that there were already too many interpretations of *Hamlet*, Terry argued, ‘You would not have, say, a violinist refrain from playing some work of Beethoven’s before an audience because that particular piece had been played by many other violinists?’.³² He frequently regurgitated the same general story (with minor variation in details) for the press. In January 1909, for example, Forbes-Robertson told *The Delineator* (a US ladies magazine) that Irving and Terry instigated the play, acknowledged his indebtedness to Irving for his advice on the role, and recalled that Irving kept an office in the Lyceum and would frequently appear at rehearsals to offer guidance and suggestions.³³

The day after the opening performance, Forbes-Robertson reportedly arrived at Irving’s office to find Irving surrounded by newspaper reviews. Irving apparently announced, ‘You’ve done it, my boy; you’ve done it! [...] now go and play it round the world!’³⁴ This story would serve as publicity ahead of future performances of the play.³⁵ Due to this patronage, Irving’s presence haunted Forbes-Robertson’s *Hamlet* from its inception, but Irving’s ghost was a welcomed and revered apparition with a reputation as the leader of the stage that could be exploited to Forbes-Robertson’s advantage.

³⁰ “‘Hamlet’ at the Lyceum’, *Sporting Life*, 14 September 1897, p. 1.

³¹ Fitzmaurice, p. 176; Dent, p. 134.

³² pp. 170-171. Irving’s *Hamlet* opened on 31 October 1874 at the Lyceum and ran for 200 performances; it remained in his repertoire until his last performance of it on 8 May 1885.

³³ pp. 94-95.

³⁴ ‘Chit Chat’, *Stage*, 17 October 1912, p. 20.

³⁵ For example, ‘Forbes-Robertson’s Visit to Exeter’, *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 8 January 1913, p. 4.

By this point in his career, Forbes-Robertson had performed to acclaim with several renowned actor-managers, including playing Lancelot to Irving's King Arthur at the Lyceum in 1895, so London theatregoers knew him well. However, securing the finance for the play (from financier Horatio Bottomley, 1860-1933) was dependent upon Campbell appearing as Ophelia, as can be seen in a letter that Campbell wrote to her sister on 29 July 1897:

Johnston has arranged to open on the 4th & has only got the Theatre & the backer through the *combination*—I & he. [...]

I don't want to make you sad—but in the face of Johnston's letter there is one from the doctor saying if I attempt to work before the end of September I will break down again. Johnston says it will be his ruin if I don't open with him.³⁶

After the failure of *Nelson's Enchantress* (discussed in Chapter 4), Campbell had a breakdown and was in a nursing home for eight weeks following which she stayed at the home of Lady Sybil Queensberry (1845-1935) in Salisbury to recuperate. Peters reports that Forbes-Robertson visited Campbell on 1 August after sixteen weeks apart and told her he had no choice but to open, but delayed from 4 September to 11 September.³⁷ The combined celebrity value of Forbes-Robertson and Campbell was therefore greater than his value alone. According to Peters's account, Campbell was difficult and disruptive in rehearsals and the weight of management was so stressful for Forbes-Robertson that he took to his bed and had to be dragged out by Ellen Terry.³⁸ That he continued to work with Campbell, love affair or not, demonstrates the significance of her celebrity to the enterprise.

In addition to Irving, Terry, and Campbell – representatives of the commercial theatre – Shaw was another important external influence in the construction of Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet*. Forbes-Robertson credited Shaw for his advice to 'turn [his] back on the conventions'.³⁹ In 1897, the public knew Shaw better for his theatre criticism for the weekly newspaper *The Saturday Review* than as a playwright. Despite the two of them having never met, when Shaw heard that Forbes-Robertson was to play Hamlet he gave him advice (in a letter now lost) on how to play the part and stage the play. The advice included performing at a swift pace, capitalising on the comedy written into the role, and specifics for staging Ophelia's madness. Possibly the most radical suggestion was to re-introduce the character of Fortinbras, who had been omitted from

³⁶ Peters, pp. 153-155.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ p. 157.

³⁹ Johnston Forbes-Robertson, 'How I Created My Greatest Part,' [...]; see also Forbes-Robertson, p. 171.

performances since the 1660s for the sake of brevity and to avoid passing the spotlight from the star performer playing Hamlet to the performer playing Fortinbras.⁴⁰ The re-introduction of Fortinbras was not unanimously praised – *The Sketch*, for instance, found it a ‘vexing anti-climax’.⁴¹ The full-page image in *The Graphic* on 18 September 1897 (Fig 2.3) depicts the entry of Fortinbras in Forbes-Robertson’s production and indicates that the inclusion of Fortinbras was a radical departure from tradition.

⁴⁰ William A. Armstrong, ‘Bernard Shaw and Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet’, *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15(1), Winter 1964, pp. 27-31. <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2867951>>.

⁴¹ ‘The New Hamlet’, *Sketch*, 15 September 1897, p. 4



HAMLET
(Mr. Forbes Robertson)

HORATIO
(Mr. Harrison Hunter)

FORTINBRAS
(Mr. Whatworth Jones)

HORATIO:—"Good-night, sweet Prince"

THE NEW HAMLET AT THE LYCEUM THEATRE; THE ENTRY OF FORTINBRAS IN THE FINAL SCENE
DRAWN BY H. M. PAGET

Fig 2.3: Full-page image in *The Graphic* depicting the entry of Fortinbras in Forbes-Robertson's production of *Hamlet* (18 September 1897).⁴²

⁴² HMP, 'The New Hamlet at the Lyceum Theatre: The Entry of Fortinbras in the Final Scene', *Graphic*, 18 September 1897, p. 4.

Shaw's congratulatory review of *Hamlet*, dated 2 October 1897, feigns astonishment at the inclusion of some of his suggestions in the production ('my eye fell on the word "Fortinbras" in the program, which so amazed me that I hardly know what I saw for the next ten minutes').⁴³ Shaw believed that, as a man of action, Fortinbras offered a foil to Hamlet. Such a Hamlet was not mad as a result of his father's death and the Ghost's demands of him, but was inherently contemplative and intellectual. Mirroring this sentiment, Forbes-Robertson would later claim that *his* 'idea is that [Hamlet] is not mad, but a highly-strung, imaginative being, a dreamer and a poet, placed in the most appalling circumstances'.⁴⁴ Shaw also praised Forbes-Robertson because, '[i]nstead of cutting every line that can possibly be spared, he retains every gem, in his own part or anyone else's, that he can make time for in a spiritedly brisk performance'.⁴⁵ Shaw influences prospective audience members' expectations and lauds his own advice (unbeknown to his readers), therefore influencing both the mounting of the production and its reception.

Shaw had a long-term antagonism running with Irving, whose productions were too lavish and his acting too unrefined for Shaw's taste. In this review he took the opportunity to contend Forbes-Robertson's superiority over Irving: 'Mr Forbes Robertson takes the part quite easily and spontaneously. There is none of that strange Lyceum intensity which comes from the perpetual struggle between Sir Henry Irving and Shakespear'.⁴⁶ He displaced Irving with Forbes-Robertson as the head of the profession and encouraged comparison, with Irving's biographer, Jeffrey Richards, suggesting that Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet 'supplanted' Irving's.⁴⁷ William Archer credited Irving's 'revolutionary' Hamlet with having instilled a revival in interest in the theatre as a fashionable activity.⁴⁸ The key features of Irving's Hamlet, Richards identifies, were chivalry, high-strung ecstasy, melancholy grace, and intellectuality.⁴⁹ Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet was also chivalrous and scholarly, but also cheerful, and, at Shaw's suggestion, sane. In a lengthy review of the play following its production in Bristol, *The Western Daily Review* described Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet as 'an impersonation of singular consistency; scholarly, intelligent, restrained, guilty of no meretricious tricks to win applause. The Hamlet of Mr Forbes Robertson

⁴³ George Bernard Shaw, 'Hamlet', in *Our Theatres in the Nineties, Vol. III* (London: Constable, 1932), <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.79683>, pp. 200-207, p. 200.

⁴⁴ 'How I Created [...] pp. 94-9; see also Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 171.

⁴⁵ Shaw, 'Hamlet' [...], p. 206.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 203.

⁴⁷ p. 123.

⁴⁸ William Archer, *About the Theatre* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1886), pp. 239-40.

⁴⁹ p. 123.

is sane throughout, and, moreover, is most distinctly a gentleman throughout'.⁵⁰ In 1915, J. H. Barnes (Polonius to Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet, 1850-1925) argued that 'he has remained *the* Hamlet of our time—graceful, feeling, pathetic, scholarly, lovable—no Hamlet of our time has read the lines so beautifully or brought out their meaning with such distinction and such distinctness'.⁵¹ The main difference appears to have been the delivery of the part. Irving's own idiosyncrasies of speech and movement rendered a unique Hamlet on the brink of madness. Irving cut significant amounts of text – specifically reducing the dialogue of other characters in order to aggrandise his own role (Shaw claimed that Irving 'does not merely cut plays: he disembowels them'), whereas Forbes-Robertson preserved much of the text.⁵² One newspaper argued that there was 'no finer elocutionist than Mr. Forbes-Robertson' and even the reviewer in *The Era*, who did not believe that the performance would make a significant mark in the history of Hamlets, praised the elocution and scholarly attention to the text.⁵³

The success of the play and the praise for Forbes-Robertson resulted in a collision of the public self of Forbes-Robertson and the fictive role of Hamlet. William Moy Thomas (1828-1910) claimed that Forbes-Robertson's 'picturesque presence, fine voice, and cultivated style, mark him out for this character'.⁵⁴ Max Beerbohm (1872-1956) observed, 'In face, and in voice, and in manner, Mr. Robertson is a heaven-born Hamlet'.⁵⁵ Meanwhile, *The Sketch* argued that he had been 'specially designed' for the part of Hamlet.⁵⁶ The previous year, the same newspaper prophesised,

To many Mr. Robertson will for the future be the ideal Hamlet. Actors of more startling character even—indeed, it may be, actors of greater genius—will come, but none of them will, in the opinion of many of us, fit so completely as he into the fascinating character of the young Danish Prince.⁵⁷

⁵⁰ 'Mr Forbes Robertson's "Hamlet"', *Western Daily Press*, 13 November 1900, p. 3.

⁵¹ *Forty Years on the Stage: Others (Principally) And Myself* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1915; repr. London: Forgotten Books, 2019), p. 215.

⁵² Richards, pp. 121-127; 'Cymbeline', *Saturday Review*, 22 September 1896, reprinted in *Dramatic Opinions and Essays with an Apology, Vol. II* ed. by James Huneker (New York: Brentano's, 1906), pp. 51-59, https://archive.org/stream/BlamingTheBard/shaw_george_bernard_blaming_the_bard_djvu.txt.

⁵³ 'Sayings & Doings of Cheltenham', *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 10 November 1900, p. 13; "'Hamlet" At the Lyceum', *Era*, 18 September 1897, p. 13.

⁵⁴ 'The Theatres', *Graphic*, 18 September 1897, p. 2.

⁵⁵ *More Theatres 1898-1903* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1969), p. 487.

⁵⁶ 'Shakespeare in Nineteen Tableaux', *Sketch*, 21 September 1898, p. 2.

⁵⁷ 'Mr. Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet', *Sketch*, 27 October 1897, p. 21.

On 14 October 1897 Fred Terry (1863-1933), actor and brother of Ellen Terry, wrote to Ian Forbes-Robertson to thank him for his tickets to *Hamlet*. He opined that, at the performance, he saw ‘Hamlet—not Forbes Robertson—but Hamlet’.⁵⁸ Such views tethered the persona of Hamlet to Forbes-Robertson’s brand. In February 1914, *Century Magazine* published Richard le Gallienne’s (1866-1947) panegyric on Forbes-Robertson, which titled him ‘the supreme *Hamlet* of his time’ and merged the various selves in his assessment of Hamlet:

To my thinking, the chief interest of all Forbes-Robertson’s other parts is that they have ‘fed’ his *Hamlet*; and, indeed, many of his best parts may be said to be studies for various sides of *Hamlet*, his fine *Romeo*, for example, which, unfortunately, he no longer plays. In *Hamlet* all his qualities converge, and in him the tradition of the stage that all an ambitious actor’s experience is only to fit him to play *Hamlet* is for once justified. But of course the chief reason of that success is that nature meant Forbes-Robertson to play *Hamlet*. Temperament, personality, experience, and training have so worked together that he does not merely play, but is, *Hamlet*. [...] As a matter of fact, of course, a great actor includes a multiplicity of selves, so that he may play many parts, yet always be playing himself.⁵⁹

This demonstrates the extent to which, since the 1897 inception of the part, Hamlet had become part of the Forbes-Robertson persona in the public consciousness.

It is noteworthy how infrequently Forbes-Robertson played *Hamlet* in London – the base of the celebrity vehicle – between its original run and his Farewell Season of 1913. The last performance of *Hamlet* at the Lyceum was on 18 December 1897, after which Irving took back the Lyceum for his own use. Forbes-Robertson then toured *Hamlet*, *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray*, and *Macbeth* in Germany and the UK in Spring 1898, then played it again on UK tours in Autumn 1900 and Autumn 1901. During Coronation week in July 1902, he played six matinees of *Hamlet* at the Lyric Theatre, London. He included *Hamlet* on his 1903-04 US tour, and again in Spring 1905, followed by a UK tour in Autumn 1906, a US tour in Spring 1907, and a final UK tour in Spring 1908. Despite this absence from London and its critics, the *Illustrated London News* printed a series of illustrations in 1909 and 1910 by Frank Haviland (1886-1971) titled ‘Haviland’s Series of Shakespearean Characters’ which, on 30 October 1909, featured an illustration of Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet (Fig 2.4) with the subtitle: ‘There are many who claim that Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s Hamlet is the finest Hamlet of the time, and it is certain that his

⁵⁸ Add MS 62701, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers. Vol. VIII (ff. 323), BL.

⁵⁹ Richard le Gallienne, ‘Forbes-Robertson: An Appreciation,’ *Century Illustrated Monthly Magazine*, v. 87, November 1913-April 1914, February, pp. 511-515.

performance as the Prince of Denmark is very remarkable'.⁶⁰ UK audiences, in particular London audiences, had little opportunity to see the play and complained that 'he has been too much away from England to satisfy his English admirers'.⁶¹ *The Clifton Society* quoted an English novelist as having said, 'I have seen some dreary actors of late, [...] and they have sent my imagination longingly across the water after Forbes-Robertson. He is wanted in England'.⁶² Yet despite this absence from the epicentre of commercial theatrical activity, Forbes-Robertson maintained his reputation as a great Hamlet and projected the notion that he was the greatest Hamlet of his time across his public. An advertisement for the play in Monroe, Los Angeles (Fig 2.5) in 1915, included the caption '[u]niversally recognized as the greatest Hamlet of the generation' suggesting that the phrase became a slogan to his brand.

⁶⁰ Frank Haviland, 'Haviland's Series of Shakespearean Characters', *Illustrated London News*, 30 October 1909, p. 14. The others in the series included Violet Vanbrugh as Lady Macbeth (24 April 1909), Constance Collier as Cleopatra (22 May 1909), Beerbohm Tree as Malvolio (3 July 1909), Norman McKinnel as King Lear (18 September 1909), Ellen Terry as Mistress Paige (9 April 1910), Beerbohm Tree as Falstaff (16 April 1910), Lewis Waller as King Henry V (23 April 1910), Miss Neilson-Terry as Viola (9 July 1910), Arthur Bouchier as Macbeth (13 August 1910), Beerbohm Tree as Cardinal Wolsey (10 September 1910), Arthur Bouchier as King Henry VIII (17 September 1910), and Benson as Richard III (1 October 1910).

⁶¹ 'Two Eminent Artistes', *Era*, 1 March 1913, p. 19.

⁶² 'Mr. Forbes-Robertson at the Prince's Theatre', *Clifton Society*, 26 September 1912, p. 13.

HAVILAND'S SERIES OF SHAKESPEAREAN CHARACTERS
(AS REPRESENTED BY OUR LEADING PLAYERS).



NO. V.—MR. J. FORBES-ROBERTSON AS HAMLET.

There are many who claim that Mr. Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet is the finest Hamlet of the time, and it is certain that his performance as the Prince of Denmark is very remarkable. Mr. Forbes-Robertson, who was born in January 1853, the eldest son of John Forbes-Robertson, an artist and journalist, of Aberdeen, made his first appearance on the stage in 1874, as Chastelard in "Mary Stuart," at the Princess's. Four years before that he had been admitted as a student at the Royal Academy School of Art. In 1900 he married Miss May Gertrude Elliott, the well-known actress.—[DRAWN BY FRANK HAVILAND.]

Image © Illustrated London News Group

Fig 2.4: 'Mr. J. Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet' in *Haviland's Series of Shakespearean Characters* (1909).

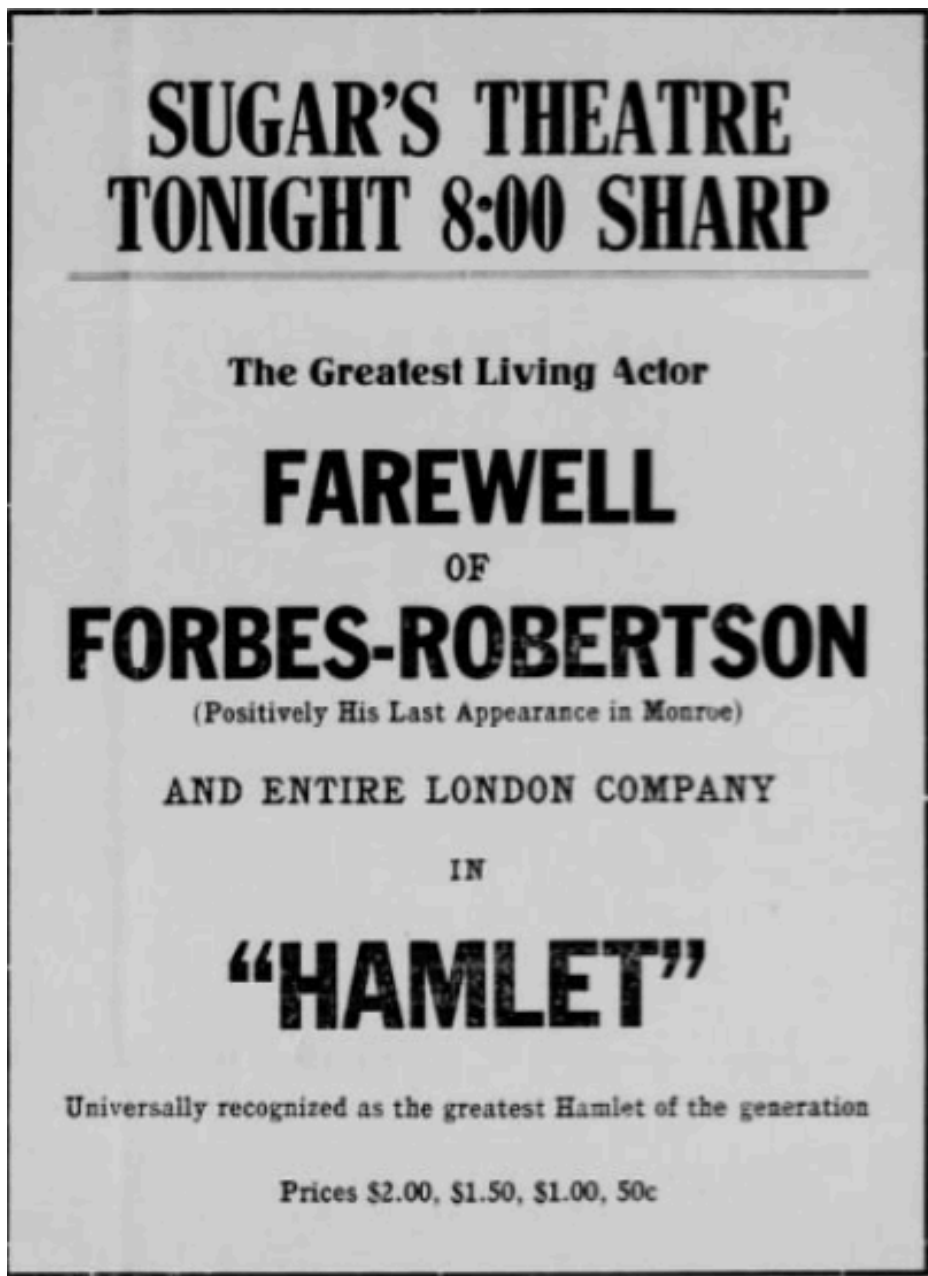


Fig 2.5: Advertisement for *Hamlet* in Monroe, Los Angeles (1915).⁶³

2.4 The UK Farewell Tour

In March 1912, while Forbes-Robertson toured *Passing* in the US, the first rumours of his retirement were percolated to the public.⁶⁴ The press understood that, following his return on 30 April, he would commence performances in London and then tour the UK, but return to the USA

⁶³ 'Amusements', *Monroe News-Star*, 11 November 1915, p. 3.

⁶⁴ 'Music and the Drama', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 2 March 1912, p. 4.

in Autumn 1913.⁶⁵ Upon his arrival in the UK, he officially announced his impending departure from the stage along with his intention to offer a farewell tour around the UK cities in Autumn 1912, and not to return to London until Spring 1913.⁶⁶ He had not performed in London since the spring of 1909 and his return was to be short-lived, so the advertisements for his performances during the farewell often played on the fact that this would be the last opportunity to see Forbes-Robertson on stage.⁶⁷ Lines such as ‘[p]ositively his last visit to Hull’ and ‘his last appearance in London’ described the occasions despite the fact that the Farewell Season in London’s Drury Lane was not for a fixed duration.⁶⁸

A central character in Forbes-Robertson’s management at this time was Percy Burton – his press-agent from 1908 until 1916. Prior to his engagement with Forbes-Robertson, Burton had worked with other actor-managers, including Wyndham, Barrett, Irving, and Hare. In 1938, Lowell Thomas amalgamated and published Burton’s reminiscences of his career working with such celebrities in *Adventures Among Immortals*. The collection of memories serves as a useful insight into the fabrication of ‘immortality’ or celebrity, in particular it exposes Burton’s manipulation of Forbes-Robertson’s brand. As a resource it has its limitations; it was written second-hand looking back over a long history and Burton may have aggrandised his role in the creation of the celebrities he worked for, but his narrative offers a plausible alternative to contrast with other resources. His duties varied, but his ultimate task was to manipulate publicity about upcoming performances, although, on occasion, he even played on-stage. For example, when Forbes-Robertson considered it too expensive to employ actors for the casket scene in *Merchant of Venice*, Burton insisted on keeping it and so he made an appearance as the Prince of Morocco to apparent great success. After his performance at Edinburgh’s Lyceum Theatre on 19 November 1912, *The Scotsman* offered, ‘Praise is also due to the excellent Prince of Morocco, contributed with a distinctly Oriental touch, by Mr Percy Burton’.⁶⁹ However, Thomas’s account reveals that such reviews may not have been genuine: ‘To read [the critics’ notices] you would

⁶⁵ ‘The Jew of Prague’, *Referee*, 21 April 1912, p. 3.

⁶⁶ ‘Actor’s Return. Mr. Forbes Robertson on his U.S. Tour and Plans’, *London Daily News*, 7 May 1912, p. 1. His UK tour included Nottingham, Bristol, Cardiff, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Newcastle.

⁶⁷ He played a season of matinees at His Majesty’s starting on 18 February 1909, performing *The High Bid* and *A Soul’s Flight (The Sacrament of Judas)*.

⁶⁸ ‘Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *Beverley and East Riding Recorder*, 18 January 1913, p. 4.

‘Mr Forbes Robertson’s Farewell’, *Globe*, 13 February 1913, p. 5.

⁶⁹ ‘Mr Forbes Robertson at the Lyceum’, *Scotsman*, 20 November 1912, p. 8.

imagine I was the finest Prince of Morocco ever seen or heard in Dallas or Denver or Blackpool. They ought to have been. I wrote some of them myself'.⁷⁰ Given that *The Scotsman's* review offered only favourable remarks, it is possible that it is an example of one that Burton wrote. This fabrication of reviews is indicative of how Burton operated and fashioned the celebrities he worked with and, in light of this, Forbes-Robertson's UK Farewell Tour can be understood as a well-choreographed manipulation of the media.

On 23 September the Farewell Tour opened in Nottingham, followed by Bristol, Cardiff, Birmingham, Liverpool, Manchester, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, Hull, Hanley, Newport, Exeter, Bath, Southampton, Portsmouth, Plymouth, and, finally, during the first week of March 1913, Bournemouth. The plays of the farewell tour included *Hamlet*, *Merchant of Venice*, *The Light That Failed*, *Mice and Men*, *Passing*, and *Caesar and Cleopatra*, but the press focussed on *Hamlet*. *Hamlet* opened at the Prince of Wales Theatre in Birmingham, on 14 October 1912, ahead of which *The Birmingham Daily Gazette* published an interview with Forbes-Robertson. The report dubbed him the 'Prince of Actors, if not the greatest of English actors'. In the interview Forbes-Robertson recalled his associations with Modjeska and Anderson, and expressed his indebtedness to Irving especially for his help with *Hamlet*.⁷¹ After the event the reporter observed that the house was full but that the audience were not there to hear *Hamlet*:

The only thing which will make the average man endure our boasted national poet for three and a half hours is the presence of a 'star' cast, [...] a good portion of [the audience] assembled not for Shakespeare, but for Forbes-Robertson. [...] There can be no doubt that Mr. Forbes-Robertson is the most wonderful Hamlet on the stage. Not only is Mr. Robertson cast in Hamlet's mould, not only has he Hamlet's face, 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought,' but he has got Hamlet's soul.⁷²

According to the reviewer, the 'average' playgoer had little interest in Shakespeare but the stardom of Forbes-Robertson, bolstered by *Hamlet*, attracted the public's attention. This would suggest that the *Hamlet* legacy or brand attached to a persona was more valuable than the play itself.

⁷⁰ Thomas, p. 27.

⁷¹ 'Prince of Actors', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 14 October 1912, p. 4.

⁷² 'The Prince of Wales Theatre', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 15 October 1912, p. 4.

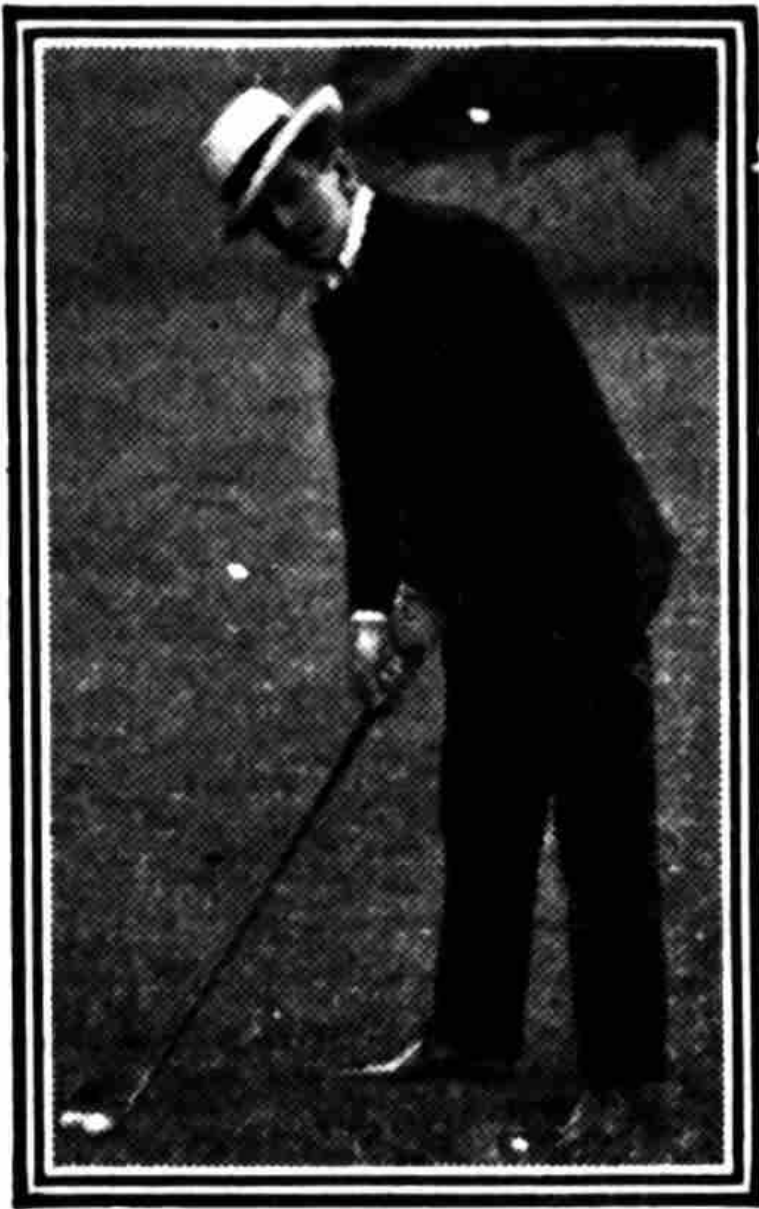
The tour stopped in Bournemouth at the Theatre Royal during the week commencing 3 March.⁷³ The press material ahead of this leg of his tour probes into Forbes-Robertson's private life to market him to the public as a fashionable and family man, while still capitalising on the cultural capital of *Hamlet*. On 21 February *The Bournemouth Graphic* advised its readers that there was to be an additional matinee on Wednesday afternoon. Accompanying the notice is a photograph of 'Forbes-Robertson At Golf' (see Fig 2.6).⁷⁴ The same edition also printed an article titled 'Forbes-Robertson at Home in England'. This article uses anecdotes of Forbes-Robertson's three daughters, Blossom (10), Jean (2), and Chloe (newborn) as a springboard for some of the frequently repeated selling points of the Forbes-Robertson biography. The article tells how he had just finished painting a portrait of Blossom before reminding readers of his association with the Royal Academy and Rossetti, and the observation that Jean is showing proficiency in French provides the opportunity to remind readers of his time in Rouen. Finally, it says that Chloe fluctuates between resembling her mother or her father dependent on her moods, which 'have the variety and versatility of "Hamlet."' ⁷⁵ The role of Hamlet followed the family with the suggestion that there is some innate genetic correlation between Forbes-Robertson and Hamlet.

⁷³ The week's playbill was as follows: Monday (*Hamlet*), Tuesday (*The Light That Failed*), Wednesday matinee (*Passing* and *The Sacrament of Judas*), Wednesday evening (*Mice and Men*), Thursday (*Passing* and *The Sacrament of Judas*), Friday (*Hamlet*), Saturday matinee (*Mice and Men*), and Saturday evening (*The Light That Failed*).

⁷⁴ 'Forbes-Robertson At Golf', *Bournemouth Graphic*, 21 February 1913, p. 5.

⁷⁵ 'Forbes-Robertson at Home in England', *Bournemouth Graphic*, 21 February 1913, p. 13.

FORBES-ROBERTSON,



AT GOLF

Fig 2.6: Image in *The Bournemouth Graphic* depicting Forbes-Robertson playing golf (1913).⁷⁶

⁷⁶ 'Forbes-Robertson At Golf,' *Bournemouth Graphic*, 21 February 1913, p. 5.

2.5 Farewell Season at Drury Lane

The UK tour ended in a Farewell Season at Drury Lane in London from 22 March 1913 to 6 June 1913, with Forbes-Robertson opening and closing the season with performances of *Hamlet*.

Following the opening, *The Globe* reported, ‘Nobility of soul and beauty of mind are the abiding impressions of the Hamlet who on Saturday night evoked an enthusiasm that has had no parallel since Sir Henry Irving bade his farewell on the same stage’.⁷⁷ After the final performance, Forbes-Robertson came before the curtain to give a speech still dressed as Hamlet. According to the *Pall Mall Gazette* he said,

This noble old playhouse [...] is haunted by the spirits of the great people of the past in my calling. And it has been to both my wife and myself a sort of inspiration. We seem to feel the influence of those spirits, and I really think that they are hovering about, and that they do help people in this theatre.⁷⁸

Luckhurst and Morin opine that Drury Lane, as the dwelling of the spectres of its numerous former performers and managers, is the most haunted theatre in the world.⁷⁹ Hindson examines the value of a ghostly presence at historic theatre buildings, arguing that the

imaginative encounters between performer and spectator conjure a magical space within a material architecture that is specifically designed to summon imagined worlds, and in these theatrical encounters the past appears more intimate: we are more aware of those who have trodden the boards or organized the performances before us.⁸⁰

The materiality of the Drury Lane Theatre building, combined with the twinned stage presence of Hamlet and the celebrity Forbes-Robertson, invoked the presence of the ghosts of Drury Lane in a crowning moment of theatricality and self-fashioning that secured Forbes-Robertson amongst their ranks.

Forbes-Robertson’s management carefully marketed the Drury Lane season, and yet archival materials indicate a tension between Forbes-Robertson’s artistic integrity and his desire for commercial success. Forbes-Robertson communicated with Shaw ahead of the opening of

⁷⁷ ‘The Theatre’, *Globe*, 24 March 1913, p. 4. In 1904 Irving began his own farewell tour with plans to retire in 1906, but died on 13 October 1905 after appearing at the Theatre Royal, Bradford.

⁷⁸ ‘Remarkable Scene’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 June 1913, p. 7.

⁷⁹ p. 3.

⁸⁰ ‘Heritage, Capital and Culture: The Ghost of ‘Sarah’ at the Bristol Old Vic’, in *Theatre and Ghosts: Materiality, Performance and Modernity* ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 82-95, p. 87.

Caesar and Cleopatra (they originally intended to open it in Nottingham on 23 September 1912 but it was delayed until 25 October in Liverpool) regarding amendments to the production.⁸¹ In a letter dated 16 November, Forbes-Robertson told Shaw, '[q]uite in confidence', that Burton had proposed Drury Lane as the venue for his London farewell. 'It is a grand house to speak in,' Forbes-Robertson wrote, 'but no expression can be seen. It is too big a house for acting'. His reluctance was well founded – the stage was vast and the auditorium large rendering an intimate performance difficult.⁸² A further letter dated 2 December confirms that Burton had persuaded him to use Drury Lane.⁸³

An extract from Burton's biography confirms Forbes-Robertson's hesitancy over appearing at Drury Lane:

As the time approached for Forbes-Robertson's retirement it became my duty to arrange for his memorable farewell appearance at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. To my amazement I had considerable difficulty. In spite of Robertson's triumphs in America, not a theatre owner or lessee in London would take a chance on letting us have a theatre on sharing terms. When I proposed going for Drury Lane, both Forbes-Robertson and his wife (that excellent actress, Gertrude Elliott), and other members of his family made objections. They considered the theatre inappropriate and the Drury Lane management did not believe we could fill the vast house.⁸⁴

However, in public, the decision to play at Drury Lane was framed as symbolic and deliberate.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* interviewed Forbes-Robertson and reported that

Mr. Forbes-Robertson feels grateful for the opportunity of appearing at Drury Lane.

'It is,' he said, 'a wonderful theatre to play in. It is not only in itself a very beautiful playhouse, beautifully conducted by Mr. Arthur Collins [1864-1932], and so perfect for sound, but it has also such an atmosphere of dignity, and such historic associations. Phelps, Macready, and dozens of prominent actors have played on its stage, and it was there that Sir Henry Irving was last seen in London.'

⁸¹ On 11 October they were still discussing cuts to *Caesar's* lines and a letter dated 13 November shows that they continued to make changes after the opening. Shaw added a prologue to the original drama, and Forbes-Robertson restored the Third Act – originally omitted for brevity – making it necessary to cut some other scenes.

⁸² According to Walter Thornbury (1878), Drury Lane's 'stage is of great extent, being 96 feet from the orchestra to the back wall, and upwards of 77 feet in width from wall to wall', ('Drury Lane Theatre' in *Old and New London: Volume 3* (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1878,) pp. 218-227. *British History Online*. <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol3/pp218-227>, [accessed 7 April 2019]).

⁸³ Add MS 50534, G. B. Shaw Papers: Series 1, Vol. XXVII (ff. 216). British Library.

⁸⁴ p. 135.

‘The proportions of the theatre are so admirable that one does not feel the largeness of the auditorium.’⁸⁵

Ultimately, following the announcement of the Drury Lane engagement, its management suggested that a frame might be used inside the proscenium in order to reduce the size of the stage in the ‘smaller plays’.⁸⁶ *The Referee* recorded that Forbes-Robertson would be playing on sharing terms in a contract with Drury Lane’s manager, Arthur Collins, that ‘follows in every particular the Irving precedent’.⁸⁷ Irving had opened at Drury Lane on 30 April 1903 with *Dante*, commissioned by Irving from Victorien Sardou and Emile Moreau (1852-1922) and translated from French by Irving’s son Laurence (1871-1914). Bram Stoker (1847-1912) recalled that the production was ‘gigantic’ – it cost approximately £13,000 to mount (equivalent to £1,371,000 in 2018), and described the venture as ‘a fearful hazard’. Despite a run of eighty-two performances in Drury Lane, it was a failure on tour.⁸⁸ According to Richards, the moderate success of the play was due to Irving’s dedicated followers rather than the merits of the play.⁸⁹ Collins had therefore taken a gamble on Irving’s celebrity when he contracted with him and it had paid off. Given the affinity between the two actor-managers, there may have been a similar motivation behind his ultimate decision to make a deal with Forbes-Robertson.

There does appear to have been some reservation regarding the viability of the venture as they initially scheduled the season to run for only six weeks, but they ultimately extended it to almost four months (22 March to 6 June).⁹⁰ The cover of the programme for the performance of *Hamlet* (see Fig 2.7) advises, ‘BOX OFFICE NOW OPEN FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD WEEKS’. This suggests they were hesitant about making advance plans and, also, that they wanted to ensure fuller houses early on in the season. They then had the opportunity to make such statements, as appeared in *The Stage*: ‘Owing to the public demand, and the fact that Drury Lane was entirely sold out at the *matinée* of *Hamlet* on Saturday, Mr. Forbes-Robertson

⁸⁵ ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 March 1913, p. 1.

⁸⁶ Forbes-Robertson’s worries concerning the size of Drury Lane appear to have been well-founded, as some members of the audience complained of difficulties seeing and hearing the performance, (‘Music and Drama’, *East London Observer*, 19 April 1913, p. 6).

⁸⁷ ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson at Drury Lane’, *Referee*, 22 December 1912, p. 3.

⁸⁸ *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: Heinemann, 1906) in *Internet Archive* <https://archive.org/details/personalreminisc00stokiala/page/n8>, pp. 176-179.

⁸⁹ p. 389.

⁹⁰ ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s Plans’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 March 1913, p. 7.

announces another *matinée* of this play on Saturday, April 12'.⁹¹ This may, of course, have been a further media ruse to encourage ticket purchases in the early weeks of the season.

THEATRE
ROYAL
DRURY LANE
LIMITED.

Managing Director, ARTHUR COLLINS

FAREWELL SEASON
(HIS LAST APPEARANCES IN LONDON)
OF
FORBES-ROBERTSON
(UNDER HIS OWN MANAGEMENT)
WITH
GERTRUDE ELLIOTT and his Company
IN
SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDY OF
HAMLET

BOX OFFICE NOW OPEN FOR THE SECOND AND THIRD WEEKS OF
FORBES-ROBERTSON'S FAREWELL SEASON,
WITH GERTRUDE ELLIOTT, IN REPERTOIRE.

EVENINGS—Monday, March 31st, Thursday, April 3rd, Saturday, April 5th, and Wednesday,
April 9th, "THE LIGHT THAT FAILED."
Tuesday, April 1st, and Friday, April 11th, "PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR
BACK," followed by "SACRAMENT OF JUDAS" (Forbes-Robertson and Gertrude
Elliott in both Plays).
Wednesday, April 2nd, Friday, April 4th, Tuesday, April 8th, and Thursday, April 10th,
"HAMLET."
Monday, April 7th, and Saturday, April 12th, "MICE AND MEN."

MATINEES—Saturday, April 5th, "PASSING OF THE THIRD FLOOR BACK" and
"SACRAMENT OF JUDAS" (Forbes-Robertson and Gertrude Elliott in both Plays);
Saturday, April 12th, "HAMLET."

The Safety Curtain is Lowered during the Intervals at each performance at this Theatre

Fig 2.7: Programme cover for Drury Lane Farewell Season performance of *Hamlet* (1913).

⁹¹ 'Chit Chat', *Stage*, 3 April 1913, p. 18.

Forbes-Robertson's reservations about using Drury Lane as a venue may have concerned more than just the size of the stage. *Hamlet*, as stated, had been given little exposure in London since its 1897 Lyceum debut, and, as Jean Chothia outlines, there were some characteristic contrasts between the two venues:

Although the gallery of the 3,450-seater Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, which aimed at a more mixed audience, also cost only pence, its stalls were ten shillings and six pence each. Henry Irving's Lyceum, where gallery seats cost a shilling, boxes as much as five guineas and evening dress was *de rigueur* in the stalls, drew a comparably more genteel audience and could earn as much as Drury Lane with half its seating capacity.⁹²

The company was therefore required to sell twice as many tickets as they had at the Lyceum to make comparable profit, and to a mixed class of clientele. Burton's objective was to encourage ticket sales across a class spectrum, including patrons who would not have attended Forbes-Robertson's Lyceum seasons 15 and 16 years earlier and, due to his long absence from the capital, possibly those who had never seen him perform. Additionally, *Hamlet* was not necessarily a guaranteed win – in Portsmouth, due to public demand, they switched the Friday 21 February performance of *Hamlet* to *Passing* and ticket holders could either exchange or refund their purchased *Hamlet* tickets.⁹³ What ensued was a media campaign to popularise and promote Forbes-Robertson's celebrity and limited time in London, while also persuading the public that *Hamlet* was particularly in demand and worth viewing.

The box office opened for the London season on 3 March with the season scheduled to begin with *Hamlet* on 22 March. Certain committees and bodies booked tickets in large numbers, possibly at the instigation of Burton for publicity purposes. Newspapers dubbed 2 April 'Carthusian night' when previous and present boys and masters of Forbes-Robertson's public school, Charterhouse, attended the performance of *Hamlet*. The management made special adaptations, such as the orchestra playing the Charterhouse song after the overture, and the press discussed the evening with interest as an occasion in its own right.⁹⁴ The event generated discussion in the press to further advertise the Farewell Season. For example, the *Leamington Spa Courier* wrote that its local MP and former Charterhouse scholar, Ernest Murray Pollock (1861-1936), was in attendance while *Western Daily Press* listed the Bishop of Gloucester and the

⁹² *English Drama of the Early Modern Period, 1890-1940* (London & New York: Routledge, 2014), p. 24.

⁹³ 'Amusements', *Portsmouth Evening News*, 21 February 1913, p. 1.

⁹⁴ 'The Talk of the Town', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 March 1913, p. 3; 'Association Football', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 April 1913, p. 258.

Prime Minister amidst a collection of titled individuals and stage celebrities.⁹⁵ Similarly, members of the International Historical Congress attended *Hamlet* on 4 April and followed the performance with a dinner and reception by the Government with a trip to Windsor the following day.⁹⁶ Such publicity where celebrities and scholarly organisations endorsed the event of another celebrity amplified the historical magnitude of the occasion.

In a letter to *The Leicester Daily Post*, dated 27 February 1913 and printed 3 March 1913, Burton responded to alleged rumours regarding Forbes-Robertson's retirement, confirming that he would not appear on the London stage again following his Drury Lane Farewell, but that Elliott would not be retiring from the stage.⁹⁷ Given Burton's mode of operation, it is likely that he had planted the initial rumours to the contrary in the newspaper himself. It does demonstrate, however, that he targeted regional newspapers with an expectation that audiences would travel to London for the landmark event. Additionally, on 8 March *The Era* ran an article titled 'The Real Forbes-Robertson' wherein Burton discussed Forbes-Robertson's off-stage personality. Burton reminded readers of Forbes-Robertson's connection to Phelps and Irving, and of his childhood summers spent in the presbytery in Rouen. He also discussed his witticisms, his family life, and some of his 'natural gifts and graces', maintaining that Forbes-Robertson's individuality lay in his 'poetic character'.⁹⁸ This demonstrates that Burton used his press connections to solidify some of the characteristic Forbes-Robertson celebrity qualities in the public imagination.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* paid a considerable amount of attention to Forbes-Robertson's Farewell. On 22 March, the newspaper printed Forbes-Robertson's thoughts on each of the plays he was to perform and insisted he would not be appearing in London on stage again.⁹⁹ It also printed a series of letters discussing his *Hamlet*. On 31 March, a letter from 'A. Knowles' posed the question of when *Hamlet* had last been performed at Drury Lane.¹⁰⁰ On 1 April there was a

⁹⁵ 'Personal Items', *Leamington Spa Courier*, 4 April 1913, p. 4; and 'Striking Tribute to Mr Forbes Robertson', *Western Daily Press*, 4 April 1913, p. 7.

⁹⁶ 'The Historical Congress', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 March 1913, p. 7.

⁹⁷ 'Letters to the Editor', *Leicester Daily Post*, 3 March 1913, p. 2.

⁹⁸ 'The Real Forbes-Robertson', *Era*, 8 March 1913, p. 19. The article was also reproduced in the *Bournemouth Graphic* ahead of his performance there (*Bournemouth Graphic*, 28 February 1913, p. 11).

⁹⁹ 'Mr. Forbes-Robertson's Farewell', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 March 1913, p. 1.

¹⁰⁰ "'Hamlet,' at Drury Lane", *Pall Mall Gazette*, 31 March 1913, p. 14.

response from ‘E. H. G. P.’ stating that the French actor Mounet-Sully (1841-1916) had played *Hamlet* there about 20 years previously. The letter went on to say,

neither Drury Lane nor any other theatre has ever had a Hamlet to compare with Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s. It seems almost incredible that there are, I believe, some ever keen playgoers who have not seen this performance. It is putting it mildly to describe it as *the* theatrical event of stage-history.¹⁰¹

There were numerous replies to this proposition over the following week, including a letter from Burton in the 4 April edition quoting Archer, to defend the assertion that there were no Drury Lane Hamlets between Macready (in 1851) until Forbes-Robertson (in 1913).¹⁰² Others went on to disprove this statement, but the inaccuracy seems to have been overshadowed by the desire to discuss the merits of Forbes-Robertson’s Hamlet and its historical significance.¹⁰³ This scenario resembles one of Burton’s publicity stunts while he was the press-agent for Barrett (1902-1904). Burton planted letters criticising Barrett’s performances in a newspaper under the pseudonym ‘A. Peabody’ to which he could then respond in defence of Barrett. Thomas explained that Burton ‘was able to keep up this two-faced correspondence for the rest of the week. Business at the theatre jumped prodigiously’.¹⁰⁴ The conversation in the *Pall Mall Gazette* may have been an example of Burton’s ‘two-faced correspondence’. Burton also relayed a story to the press about a lady who had reserved a box for a performance:

During the evening the manager of a well-known restaurant rang up the box office and asked if the lady had appeared, as she had left their restaurant without paying for her party’s dinner.

The fact of her telephoning to Drury Lane from the restaurant and reserving a box had inspired confidence in the management—of the restaurant, not the theatre, where she was never seen!¹⁰⁵

The implied message behind this story is of the prestige afforded by attending a Forbes-Robertson performance at Drury Lane. The significant press attention on Forbes-Robertson’s Season generated interest and discussion. By 25 April the *Western Daily Press* reported that ‘over 100,000 people have visited Drury Lane Theatre during the first five weeks of Mr Forbes-Robertson’s farewell season’.¹⁰⁶ Even allowing for hyperbole and the fact that some articles may

¹⁰¹ ‘Drury Lane Hamlets’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1 April 1913, p. 5.

¹⁰² ‘Drury Lane Hamlets’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 4 April 1913, p. 7.

¹⁰³ ‘Drury Lane Hamlets’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 April 1913, p. 5; 7 April 1913, p. 7; 9 April 1913, p. 7.

¹⁰⁴ pp. 54-57.

¹⁰⁵ ‘Little Stories of the Day’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 April 1913, p. 3.

¹⁰⁶ ‘Mr Forbes-Robertson’, *Western Daily Press*, 25 April 1913, p. 5.

have been the work of Burton, the season was well attended and well received, particularly *Hamlet*.

The recurring epithets to describe his Hamlet in reviews include: sentimental, beautiful, princely, and scholarly. The *Globe* told of the ‘joy of a supremely beautiful reading of the greatest of stage characters. Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Hamlet is, to many playgoers, an abiding memory of princely graciousness, poetic melancholy, and exalted mind’.¹⁰⁷ *The Times* suggested that ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson did well to open his leave-taking to London with *Hamlet*, for of many beautiful performances, some of which we have mentioned, his performance of Hamlet stands out as the most completely and choicely beautiful’.¹⁰⁸ Meanwhile, the *Cheltenham Examiner* hailed Forbes-Robertson as

the noblest Hamlet of our time, and not to have seen him is to have missed the finest opportunity of seeing into the very heart of that mystery which is really no mystery at all—the psychology of an affectionate, contemplative nature broken in its contact with a rude and barbarous generation.¹⁰⁹

The Farewell Season was becoming a media sensation, as the publicity efforts aimed at constructing a narrative highlighting the greatest *Hamlet* had been successful, as demonstrated by the fact that local newspapers were reproducing that narrative.

The media shone a spotlight on his Hamlet by placing images of the play on the covers of newspapers and magazines. The illustration on the front cover of *The Sphere* (29 March 1913) by Fortuninio Matania (1881-1963) depicted a somewhat younger-looking Forbes-Robertson Hamlet, having mortally wounded Claudius (see Fig 2.8), while the front cover of the (March 1913) *Play Pictorial* (see Fig 2.9) featured a photograph of a contemplative and melancholy Forbes-Robertson Hamlet. That issue of *The Play Pictorial* was dedicated to the Forbes-Robertson Farewell Season and included photographs and discussions of his various roles with an emphasis on his production of *Hamlet* as the ‘pinnacle’ of his career for having created an ‘ideal’ Hamlet.¹¹⁰ In fact, the proliferation of the disseminating of Forbes-Robertson’s image at this time demonstrates that he, far from retiring into obscurity, not only wanted to be remembered but also

¹⁰⁷ ‘The Theatre’, *Globe*, 24 March 1913, p. 4.

¹⁰⁸ ‘Drury Lane Theatre’, *The Times*, 24 March 1913, p. 8.

¹⁰⁹ ‘A Lady’s London Letter’, *Cheltenham Examiner*, 27 March 1913, p. 2.

¹¹⁰ ‘Farewell of Forbes-Robertson, 1913, Drury Lane Theatre,’ *The Play Pictorial* (Vol. XXI, No. 129), March 1913, p. 111, in M&M, BTC (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO).

wanted to enhance his celebrity image. Along the Farewell Tour souvenir booklets were distributed at selected performances. *Western Daily Press* claimed that the booklet, containing a series of sixteen portraits of Forbes-Robertson in various characters from across his career, ‘[would] act as a pleasing reminder of the farewell visit of the great actor, and they [would] be prized by those who receive[d] them’.¹¹¹ The photographs included him in the roles of: Hamlet, Macbeth, Romeo, Othello, Shylock, Lancelot from *King Arthur*, Claudio in *Much Ado About Nothing*, Buckingham in *Henry VIII*, Constantine in *For the Crown*, Leontes in *The Winter’s Tale*, Orlando in *As You Like It*, Caesar in *Caesar and Cleopatra*, Dick Helder in *The Light That Failed*, plus a photograph of a marble bust by Emil Fuchs (1866-1929), portrait of Forbes-Robertson by George Harcourt (see Fig 2.10, 1868-1947), and a portrait of Elliott by Hugh Rivière (1869-1956).

¹¹¹ ‘Mr Forbes Robertson’s Farewell’, *Western Daily Press*, 14 September 1912, p. 5.



Fig 2.8: Illustration of Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet after mortally wounding Claudius in *Sphere* (29 March 1913).¹¹²

¹¹² ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell Season at Drury Lane—The Revival of “Hamlet”’, *Sphere*, 29 March 1913, p. 1.



Fig 2.9: Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet, front cover of *The Play Pictorial* (March 1913).¹¹³

¹¹³ *The Play Pictorial* (Vol. XXI, No. 129), March 1913, p. 111, in M&M, BTC (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO).



Fig 2.10: Forbes-Robertson, oil on canvas by George Harcourt, reproduced in the Souvenir for Forbes-Robertson's Farewell (1913).¹¹⁴

The Royal Academy of Arts included the oil painting by Harcourt in its 145th exhibition from May to August 1913. Most of the other photographs from the souvenir booklet featured him as a younger man costumed in his fictional roles, but Harcourt's painting depicted a contemporary distinguished-looking Forbes-Robertson in morning suit and cravat. The image suggests his status as a gentleman, possibly even foreshadowing the knighthood he was soon to receive. The black costume, firstly, allows attention to be placed on his facial features that were the focus of so much attention throughout his career. Secondly, the costume is evocative of his

¹¹⁴ *Sir Johnstone Forbes-Robertson*, 1913, oil paint on canvas, 171 × 88cm, Garrick Club London, <http://garrick.ssl.co.uk/object-g0230> [accessed 21 April 2019].

two most famous roles as Hamlet (who wore a black smock and cloak) and the Stranger (who wore a black morning suit). His pose – gazing contemplatively into the distance – is reminiscent of the iconic image of his Hamlet as featured on the cover of *Play Pictorial* (Fig 2.9). The presence of this painting in the Royal Academy Exhibition was a reminder of his intermedial skills and professionalism, while also a haunting presence of his former calling.

News that Forbes-Robertson would be conferred with a knighthood came in the final week at Drury Lane and fueled the media attention on the Season. On 3 June, the *Pall Mall Gazette* sent a representative to interview him, who reported him as saying,

[M]y last performance of all will, I suppose, be ‘Hamlet.’ I have been playing it now off and on pretty regularly for fifteen years. I have never counted the number of times I have played it, but it must be nearly a thousand.

The reporter anticipated that he would receive ‘the greatest welcome of his life’ at the performance that evening.¹¹⁵ Meanwhile, *The Stage* observed,

It would perhaps have been difficult to desire a more appropriate time for the knighthood than when the actor, reaching mature years, yet with his acting powers at their best, and with the beauty and richness of his wonderful voice unimpaired, is saying farewell to the London public.¹¹⁶

This claim is astute in light of Burton’s version of events and his involvement in the procuring of Forbes-Robertson’s knighthood:

I [...] approached Dame Madge Kendal [1848-1935] to sound her out as to the likelihood of a knighthood for Forbes-Robertson – this without his knowledge. Dame Madge was most enthusiastic and exclaimed at once: ‘I’ll write to the King about it to-day.’ King George, a keen and discriminating theatre-goer, had more than once expressed his admiration for Forbes-Robertson. But, of course, the King alone doesn’t decide the awarding of honours. So a journalist friend of mine, S. R. Littlewood, went to Sir Robert Donald [1860-1933], then editor of the *Daily Chronicle* and a close friend of Herbert Asquith [1852-1938], then Prime Minister. And, during the last week of his Drury Lane season, Forbes-Robertson became Sir Johnston.¹¹⁷

The knighthood – an expression of nobility and gentility – as Irving had received before him, was therefore part of the extra-theatrical performance of celebrity. Burton also took credit for having hyphenated ‘Forbes Robertson’ in the approach to his knighthood, presumably to render it more

¹¹⁵ ‘Another Honour to my Calling’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 June 1913, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ ‘Chit Chat’, *Stage*, 5 June 1913, p. 20.

¹¹⁷ Thomas, p. 135-136.

prestigious-sounding.¹¹⁸ The surging value of a Forbes-Robertson performance, and, in particular, a performance of *Hamlet*, is demonstrated by the increased ticket prices for the final night. ‘Even at these higher prices,’ the *Pall Mall Gazette* claimed, ‘Drury Lane could have been sold out [...] twice over’.¹¹⁹ It reported playgoers queuing outside Drury Lane from 5 a.m. to buy their tickets and interviewed people who had allegedly queued for several hours over the course of the season. It estimated that the value of the house throughout the season was between £600 and £700 a night (equivalent to between £57,990 and £67,660 in 2018), but it reported that the value for the final performance exceeded £1000 (equivalent to £96,650 in 2018).¹²⁰

According to *The Stage*, throughout the final performance of *Hamlet* ‘there was that attentive strain, that expectant hush among the vast audience’ and, following the performance, the audience cheered and called him to make a speech, in which he spoke of his early experiences of playing Hamlet, the high standard of the acting of the day, the previous performers of Drury Lane, and thanked the audience for the honours given him.¹²¹ Enthusiasts continued to sing ‘For He’s a Jolly Good Fellow’ past midnight, re-called him repeatedly, crowded to shake his hands, and even after exiting the building they gathered to cheer him leave. Forbes-Robertson’s sister Ida reported the audience’s reactions in her diary:

When the people saw him all then in the stalls rushed at him to shake his hand. The people behind pushed so hard & the Pit people were climbing on the palisade - he was getting surrounded & pushed [...]. His last guests behind didn’t leave till past one - and at 20m past that hour there was a huge crowd at the stage door. Percy and I were going home in the car - we could scarcely get in the crowd pressed so hard to see & touch him. When inside I saw nothing but hands thrust in at the windows - he shook as many as possible - the car couldn’t start for the crowd.¹²²

A letter from Forbes-Robertson to his daughter, Blossom, on 11 June similarly describes the ambush.¹²³ In the same letter, Forbes-Robertson wrote, ‘They have all gone to be cinematographed today. Won’t it be amusing to see Hamlet?’ That is, the knighthood, the final

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 107.

¹¹⁹ Prices for the last night of *Hamlet*: Gallery: 1s., Pit: 2s. 6d., Balcony: 7s. 6d., First Circle: 10s. 6d., Other rows: 15s., Front Row Grand Circle: £1 1s., Stalls: £1 1s. ‘Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 2 June 1913, p. 6.

¹²⁰ ‘To-night’s Farewell’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 June 1913, p. 9.

¹²¹ ‘Sir J. Forbes-Robertson’, *Stage*, 12 June 1913, p. 21; ‘Remarkable Scene at Drury Lane’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 June 1913, p. 7.

¹²² Add MS 62699, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers, Vol. VI, Diary of Ida Mary Buchanan, (ff. 89). British Library), p. 80.

¹²³ M&M, BTC (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO).

farewell performance and the beginning of the production of the film version of Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet* all took place within a week of each other. The discussion that follows demonstrates that the film was a continuity of the media frenzy that had surrounded the Farewell Season.

2.6 Gaumont-Hepworth *Hamlet*

The *Hamlet* film broke records with the cost involved in its production and was considered one of the major cinematic events of the year, all of which reverberated in the expansive publicity surrounding the venture. Recent examinations of the film by Burrows (2003), Buchanan (2009), and Emma Smith (2000) acknowledge how the filmmakers and distributors showcased Forbes-Robertson's celebrity. Buchanan claims that 'as soon as the filming project had been announced in June [1913], it became the subject of an intense and enthusiastic publicity campaign'.¹²⁴ Burrows similarly observes the media's wide coverage of the film in the approach to the premier.¹²⁵ As this chapter has demonstrated, by the time the press announced the making of the film, the publicity campaign for his Farewell Tour and Season was already operating. This section shows that, rather than merely exhibiting his celebrity, the film and its related events and publicity belonged to the run of media events orchestrated to further establish and broaden the horizons of that celebrity.

The British Gaumont Company commissioned the English film producer, Cecil Hepworth, to produce *Hamlet* in the summer of 1913 with Hay Plumb (1883-1960) as director. Featuring Forbes-Robertson and Elliott with their Drury Lane company, at a reported 5,800 feet and running time of approximately 96 minutes (depending on projection speed) the film is perceived as belonging to a new wave of stage plays being preserved on film and a response to the demand for films made in the UK.¹²⁶ The decision to commission Hepworth is noteworthy as Gaumont and Hepworth's own company, the Hepworth Manufacturing Company, were rival production

¹²⁴ p. 150.

¹²⁵ p. 118.

¹²⁶ The viewing version in the BFI is shorter and displays the banner of Knickerbocker Star Features – the US distributors. Its US release date was 7 July 1915, and *Motion Picture News* reported that the film was cut to reduce the running time by half and to highlight the action. Milne claims the original British version was 5,600 ft, (although Ball claims it was 5,800 ft) which would give it a running time of approximately 93 minutes, (Peter Milne, 'Hamlet', *Motion Picture News*, 10 July 1915, p. 73).

companies competing in a free market. Gaumont had acted as distributor for Hepworth before the making of *Hamlet*, such as for Hepworth's films of Queen Victoria's funeral, and his films were reputed for displaying English landscapes and capturing a sense of national character.¹²⁷ A double-page advert in *The Bioscope* in December 1911 reads: 'Hepworth Manufacturing Co. No programme complete without a Hepworth's Picture Drama. THEY'RE ALL ENGLISH'.¹²⁸ He cultivated an image as a rebel against American film style and believed that

the best hope and the most honourable course for every country is to be true to its own culture, to produce the pictures which are native and natural to it, and to try to tell of the things which are good and worthy about it and its civilisation.¹²⁹

Additionally, his company had recently adapted British novels for film, such as *Oliver Twist* (1912) and *David Copperfield* (1913). On 24 July 1913, *The Bioscope* printed an interview with Hepworth which opened:

The filming of 'Hamlet,' the greatest English play, with Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, the greatest living exponent of the most famous part in the whole world's drama, in the title *role*, has been perhaps the most notable event up to the present in the history of cinematography.¹³⁰

Gaumont's commissioning of Hepworth therefore added to the cultural framework for the project that the press used in the publicity that marked it as one of the major cinematic events of the year owing to its prestigious and glamorous aura.

Hepworth filmed the interior scenes in his studio at Walton-on-Thames and the outdoor scenes at Lulworth Cove in Dorset (where a mock Elsinore Castle was erected), in Maxine Elliott's residence at Hartsbourne Manor (for the scenes of Ophelia's wanderings through the wood and her burial), and in a private garden at Halliford-on-Thames (for the grounds of the castle). On 5 July, the *Illustrated London News* reproduced stills from the film on a double-page spread. The stills chosen were those depicting Hamlet outside the castle and on the beach, and the

¹²⁷ Andrew Higson (1995) explains that Hepworth was 'widely celebrated as a maker of specifically *English* films, films that articulated a nostalgic, pre-modern, semi-ruralist sensibility', ('Cecil Hepworth, *Alice in Wonderland* and the Development of the Narrative Film', in *Young and innocent? The Cinema in Britain 1896-1930* ed. by Andrew Higson (Exeter: UP, 2002), pp. 42-64, p. 47; see also Higson's 'The Heritage Film, British Cinema, and the National Past: *Comin' Thro' The Rye*' in *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* ed. by Andrew Higson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), pp. 29-45).

¹²⁸ 'Advertisements', *Bioscope*, 21 December 1911, pp. 24-25.

¹²⁹ Cecil Hepworth, *Came the Dawn: Memories of a Film Pioneer* (London: Phoenix House, 1951), pg 55.

¹³⁰ 'The Filming of "Hamlet"', *Bioscope*, 24 July 1913, p. 275.

article also highlighted scenes displaying technical innovation, such as the appearance of the ghost by double-exposure on the ramparts. The title of the article, ““Hamlet” at over £3 a Second: Sir J. Forbes-Robertson Acting Shakespeare’s Tragedy for the Cinematograph’, incorporated the key features of the marketing that was to follow: the play, the cost, and the star. The accompanying article supplied the cost of production as £10,000 (equivalent to £966,500 in 2018), while *Motography*, in an update on the film’s production on 26 July 1913, expressed that no ‘expenses have been spared’ in the creation of the film and that the sets were fabricated ‘regardless of expense’.¹³¹ Local cinemas also emphasised the cost involved in having secured rights to exhibit the film – the management at Queen’s Hall Picture Theatre in Northumberland Place in Newcastle reported paying a record figure for the privilege.¹³² Thus did the lavishness of the project underpin the marketing.

Forbes-Robertson purportedly earned £2,000 for three weeks’ filming (equivalent to £193,300 in 2018), rendering him, according to Burrows, the highest paid theatre performer appearing on film to date.¹³³ This investment reflects the company’s perceived valuation of his celebrity name. The ability to market a recognisable brand to potential patrons was a benefit for film companies using theatre celebrities as, at the time, the financial investment of production companies into the commodification of film actors was still in its infancy. Shail explains that there was little incentive for film companies to create a celebrity profile for regular employees acting for the camera as they could leave the company and take their celebrity profile with them at the next expiration of their contract (if they even had one). Before late 1909 all production companies appear to have believed that the cost involved in linking a film title with a performer in the public consciousness through publicity materials could only be justified if that performer had existing celebrity, and, even after 1909, forays into celebrity-building for regular film

¹³¹ ““Hamlet” at over £3 a Second: Sir J. Forbes-Robertson Acting Shakespeare’s Tragedy for the Cinematograph’, *Illustrated London News*, 5 July 1913, p. 24-25; and ‘Forbes Robertson’s “Hamlet”’, *Motography*, 26 July 1913, p. 66. The high budget of the film was soon to be surpassed as *The Bioscope* announced in August 1913 that the Film d’Art Company had produced *The Three Musketeers* at a cost of £18,000 (equivalent to £1,740,000 in 2018), (‘Our View’, *Bioscope*, 14 August 1913, p. 10).

¹³² ‘Newcastle and District’, *Bioscope*, 18 September 1913, p. 12.

¹³³ ‘Hamlet’, *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly*, 24 July 1913, p. xliii; and Burrows, (2003), p. 10.

performers were tentative.¹³⁴ As a solution to this, Hepworth proposed issuing actors with a pseudonym or ‘nom de guerre’ that stayed with a company rather than with the actor, but the idea was not legally enforceable.¹³⁵ One principal method for utilising existing celebrity, given cinema’s infancy, was to ‘borrow’ a celebrity, short-term, from an older cultural realm. Peter Milne observed this valuing of existing celebrity in *Motion Picture News* when the film was released in the US on 7 July 1915, stating “‘Hamlet’ linked with the name of Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson is a huge advertising asset”.¹³⁶ *Motion Picture News* opined that its release in the US on this date was

particularly opportune, since it follows closely the tour recently made of the principal cities of the United States by the eminent star Sir Forbes-Robertson and his famous Drury Lane company. Thus, by timeliness, the great advertising value of Sir Forbes-Robertson’s name is further enhanced.¹³⁷

Forbes-Robertson’s image was as lucrative as his name. The poster for the screening at the Academy Picture Palace in Brighton in November 1913 (Fig 2.11) does not include his name, but a photograph of him dressed as Hamlet at the centre illustrates the venue’s belief in the value of his image. A full-page illustration of Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet in *The Bioscope* on 2 October 1913 pictures a Hamlet looking rather proud of himself, rather than introspective (see Fig 2.12).

¹³⁴ Andrew Shail, *The Origins of the Film Star System: Persona, Publicity and Economics in Early Cinema* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), pp. 24-25.

¹³⁵ Hepworth, pp. 81-82.

¹³⁶ Peter Milne, ‘Hamlet,’ *Motion Picture News*, 10 July 1915, p. 73.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*



Fig 2.11: Poster for screening at the Academy Picture Palace, Brighton (1913).¹³⁸

¹³⁸Retrieved from, Michael P. Jensen
http://michaelpjensen.com/home_page/hamlet_1913, [accessed 1 March 2019].



SIR JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON, whose great impersonation of "Hamlet" has recently been recorded by the cinematograph.

Fig 2.12: Cartoon of Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet in *The Bioscope* (1913).¹³⁹

With a notable play, performer, producer, and established celebrity network in place, there was a need for a suitable location for the premier. The rationale behind the decision to open the film at the New Gallery Kinema on Regent Street on 22 September is evident from a description of its short history. Fellow actor-manager, George Alexander, inaugurated the picture house on 14 January 1913 and emphasised its aspiration to be a site of luxury for the exhibition of quality, educational, and morally uplifting films.¹⁴⁰ It was highly decorated and had a 900-person seating capacity, a restaurant and tearooms attached, a waiting-hall with easy chairs, writing tables, and

¹³⁹ *Supplement to "Hamlet" at the New Gallery*, *Bioscope*, 2 October 1913, p. 15.

¹⁴⁰ 'The New Gallery Kinema', *Stage*, 16 January 1913, p. 21.

telephones.¹⁴¹ The site of the new cinema that would display walking shadows had its own ghosts.¹⁴² Newspapers added to its charm and character as they retold the history of the site from its use in 1682 as a yard for stable horses to the exhibition of paintings of contemporary artists from 1898.¹⁴³ The lessees of the building were Horace Sedger and Edward Laurillard (1870-1936) who both had roots in theatrical business ventures. They predicted that there was a demand for films ‘equivalent to a high-class play, and presented on the same high-class lines as a West End theatre’.¹⁴⁴ The cinema consciously and unabashedly promoted its ambitions, as is evident from its claim in the right column of the programme on sale at the cinema at the *Hamlet* exhibitions that ‘The Highest Class Pictures only [are] shown in the New Gallery Kinema, which is admitted to be the Most Luxurious Picture House in Europe’ (Fig 2.13). The press feted it for exhibiting diverse topics, with the *Daily Herald* claiming that it ‘should be supported by all those who wish to see moving pictures lifted out of the pit of vulgarity and sensationalism into which they have fallen’.¹⁴⁵ This venue therefore complemented the character that had been determined for the film.

¹⁴¹ ‘Cinematograph Shows,’ *Gloucester Citizen*, 2 December 1912, p. 2.

¹⁴² Maxim Gorky called bodies in films ‘shadows’ as early as 4 July 1896 in a review of the Lumière programme at the Nizhni-Novgorod Fair, which he called the ‘Kingdom of Shadows’ and also acknowledged the ghostly presence in these early films: ‘It is terrifying to see, but it is the movement of shadows, only of shadows. Curses and ghosts, the evil spirits that have cast entire cities into eternal sleep, come to mind’, (I. M. Pacatus, *Nizhegorodshi listok*, 4 July 1896, trans. by Leda Swan, in Jay Leda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), pp. 407-409).

¹⁴³ ‘Four Centuries of the New Gallery’, *Globe*, 14 December 1912, p. 8.

¹⁴⁴ ‘The Growth of the Cinema’, *Bioscope*, 12 December 1912, p. 855.

¹⁴⁵ Derek Ross, ‘A Kinema Theatre’, *Daily Herald*, 10 March 1913, p. 7. Ahead of *Hamlet*, New Gallery Kinema had shown *Les Misérables*, footage of the British Antarctic Expedition, the Carnegie Museum Exhibition pictures of Alaska and other Arctic countries, scenes from the Royal Navy and Military Tournament, bear hunting in Russia, The Epsom Derby (with the intervention of suffragette Emily Davison), *Romeo and Juliet*, and the Guards’ torchlight tattoo.

ceaseless Entertainment daily from 2 to 11 p.m. (Sundays from 6 to 11 pm.).
All Social, Sporting, and Topical Events shown immediately after occurrence.

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 22nd, 1913.

PROGRAMME.

1. OVERTURE

2. EASTERN PASSIONS

An Episode of the Ghent Exhibition.

Messrs. HORACE SEDGER & EDWARD LAURILLARD

PRESENT

HAMLET

Incidental Music arranged by Mr. M. G. FERECESCU.

Characters:

Claudius, King of Denmark	WALTER RINGHAM
Horatio, Friend to Hamlet	J. FORBES
Polonius, Lord Chamberlain	S. A. COOSON
Gertrude, Queen of Denmark	J. H. BARNES
Ghost of Hamlet's Father	ALF. PERCY HODGES
Fortinbras, Prince of Norway	ALF. PERCY HODGES
Guidenbranz, Ambassador	ALF. PERCY HODGES
Oberic, Courtiers	MONTAGUE RUPHERSON
Barnellus, Officers	GEORGE HAYES
Francisco, a Soldier	A. ROBERTS
Rymalia, Servant to Polonius	E. BRIGSON
First Player	ERIC ADENEY
Second Player	ROBERT ANDREAN
Street Grave-digger	R. ANDEAN
First Grave-digger	J. H. RILEY
Priest	R. MONTAGUE
Gertrude, Queen of Denmark	Miss ADELINE BOURNE
Player-Queen	Miss OLIVE RICHARDSON
Ophelia, Daughter to Polonius	AND ... Miss GERTRUDE ELLIOTT

The Film produced by Messrs. GAUMONT & CO., LTD.

Messrs. HORACE SEDGER and EDWARD LAURILLARD beg to announce that "HAMLET" will be shown Daily at 3 p.m. and 9 p.m.

NOTABLE EVENTS.

THE THREE MUSKETEERS
 d' ALEXANDRE DUMAS, Pere
 will be produced on October 22nd.

The Cast includes:

M. DEHELLY (de la Comedie Francaise) as Le Chevalier D'Artaquin.
 M. PHILIPPE GARNIER as Le Cardinal Richelieu.
 M. CANDE as Portos.
 M. VIBERT (du Theatre Antoine) as Athos.
 M. VOLNYS (de l'Abence) as Le Comte de Rochefort.
 Mlle. AIMEE DE RAYNAL (de-la Comedie Royale) as La Reine Anne d'Austric.
 Mlle. NELLY CORMAN (du Theatre du Gymnase) as Charlotte Bachson
 Mlle. GUIZELLE (de l'Abence) as Constance Bonacieux.

"THE THREE MUSKETEERS" is the masterpiece of Le Film d'Art, and was produced at a cost of £18,000. The film has been pronounced to be "the greatest screen production yet attempted."

Seymour Hicks and Ellaline Terriss
 On September 29th, FOR ONE WEEK ONLY.

composed of selected musicians plays from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

SPECIAL NOTICE.—For the convenience of the Medical and Professional gentlemen attending the Theatre, the use of the Telephone is at their disposal upon giving name and number of seat to Attendant.

Patrons are kindly invited to address all Complaints, or any Suggestions to the Manager.

The Highest Class Pictures only shown in the New Gallery Kinema, which is admitted to be the Most Luxurious Picture House in Europe.

Fig 2.13: New Gallery Kinema programme for Hamlet (1913).

The press reported the great demand for tickets to the film's premiere with *The Globe* claiming that the event indicated a 'new era' for cinemas.¹⁴⁶ The *Pall Mall Gazette* flaunted the names of celebrities – from painters to politicians – attending the event to illustrate that attendance at the cinema was socially acceptable. *The London Standard* also reported that the evening dress of the fashionable patrons was comparable to that seen at a high-class West-End theatre, and that the audience clapped when the main actors were recognised on screen.¹⁴⁷ *The Shoreditch Observer* commented that 'the New Gallery Kinema is now ranging itself even against the legitimate theatres for an evening performance of one play only'.¹⁴⁸ Forbes-Robertson and Elliott did not attend the event as they had already set sail for the US, but there was a display of a marconigram dispatched from Forbes-Robertson expressing his regret at his absence.

The description of the manufacturing conditions, publicity, and events surrounding the release of *Hamlet* so far highlight the pomp and glamour that imbued the film. The general view of the *Hamlet* film venture is that Forbes-Robertson leased his prestigious celebrity to the film industry, suggesting that Gaumont would be in receipt of his cultural capital and could thus attract new, middle-class, viewers to cinemas. For example, Smith argues that the similarities between the stage play and the film 'suggest that the same audience was being addressed. It is hard to assess the kind of audience for such literary films, beyond the assertion that they were a bid for respectability and a middle-class clientele'.¹⁴⁹ However, the narrative bifurcates, as there is also a body of evidence that indicates that the film was not just targeting theatregoers. Buchanan indicates that 'there were other audiences to consider as well if the picture was to recoup its significant outlay'.¹⁵⁰ For example, in Bexhill-on-Sea, where the film was played during a 'Shakespeare Week' at the Cinema Theatre, a contributor to the *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer* was concerned that it might not be a suitable choice for its regular patrons, highlighting its departure from the usual programme:

Good business is not invariably associated with Shakespeare's plays. What then could be expected of the picture public, who are credited with a taste for even lighter fare than the patrons of the ordinary theatre? The humours and the grotesquely impossible, the doing exploits of Broncho Billy in the Wild West, the adventures of a detective, or pictures hot

¹⁴⁶ "'Hamlet' on the Film', *Globe*, 19 September 1913, p. 6.

¹⁴⁷ 'The Talk of the Town', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 September 1913, p. 7; "'Hamlet' on the Cinema', *London Standard*, 23 September 1913, p. 8.

¹⁴⁸ 'Hamlet on the Film', *Shoreditch Observer*, 20 September 1913, p. 8.

¹⁴⁹ (2000), p. 48.

¹⁵⁰ (2009), p. 160.

from the scene of actuality, all these appeal to the cinema habitue [...]. But a drama by Shakespeare, [...] how would lovers of light and amusing pictures receive such an entertainment?

S/he went on to advise potential patrons to study the plot before viewing the film.¹⁵¹ Buchanan describes that a tie-in novelisation (costing 1s) was one way in which national publicity worked to overcome the obstacle in the way of attracting an audience who were not familiar with the story of *Hamlet*. The novelisation, titled *Shakespeare's Hamlet: The Story of the Play Concisely Told. Produced in Conjunction with the Cinematograph Film Showing Sir J. Forbes-Robertson and Miss Gertrude Elliott and their Full Company from Drury Lane Theatre with 55 Illustrations Taken from the Film*, clarified the plot but recounts the story with a 'populist tone'. Its hero was a Hamlet of 'populist heroics and decisive action – a bold and active Hamlet' that was incompatible with the introspective Forbes-Robertson Hamlet.¹⁵²

The media campaign to promote the prestige of the film and the campaign to promote a popular *Hamlet* therefore ran parallel to each other. This is evident in the September issue of *Illustrated Films Monthly* which, ahead of the film's premier, published a feature on the film including a synopsis of Forbes-Robertson's career and highlighted his education at Charterhouse, in France, and his tuition at the Royal Academy of Arts. The magazine printed eleven stills from the film (all but one featuring Forbes-Robertson) with some iconic moments from the play (the appearance of the Ghost, holding Yorick's skull, the Mousetrap scene, and the poisoning of Gertrude) annotated with quotations from the play. It outlines the plot with a preface reading, 'The story of this great tragedy is familiar to the majority of playgoers and to all Shakespeare readers, but as some may like to have their memories refreshed, we venture to give a brief *résumé* of the plot'. The article offers that the moral of the story is that 'murder will out' and alludes to the Biblical message of Matthew 10:29 that claims that 'not a sparrow falls' without God noticing and aggression will be 'expose[d] and punishe[d]'.¹⁵³ Action, culture, didactic endings: the film promised them all. It does not appear that the film was marketed towards the supposedly play-going, educated middle class or the assumed cinema-attending working-class audience, but both: i.e. a mass audience.

¹⁵¹ 'Amusements', *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer*, 25 October 1913, p. 7.

¹⁵² *Shakespeare's Hamlet: The Story of the Play...* (London: Stanley Paul, 1913), quoted in Buchanan, (2009), p. 160; see also Burrows, (2003), p. 131.

¹⁵³ 'A Scene from the Gaumont Great Film, "Hamlet."', *Illustrated Films Monthly*, September 1913, pp. 2-8.

The campaign's target audience can be assessed by determining how financially accessible Forbes-Robertson's performances were. The cheapest ticket for a performance of the *Hamlet* play at Drury Lane in 1913 was 1s for a seat in the Gallery. By comparison, the cheapest seats for the *Hamlet* film at the New Gallery Kinema cost 6d. The film played in towns and cities across the country and tickets sold for a range of prices.¹⁵⁴ The Gallery Kinema Eastbourne (hailed the 'most luxurious Hall in the Town') and The Picture House in Dublin had seats ranging from 6d to 1s. 6d, whereas the Vaudeville Electric Theatre in Reading and the King's Theatre in Dundee had tickets at 3d, 6d, 9d, and 1s.¹⁵⁵ The Empire Theatre in Coventry had tickets in the gallery selling for as little as 2d. Burrows (2017) deduces that, in 1910, 74% of seats provided in cinemas cost 3d to occupy. This places some tickets to *Hamlet* at the more expensive end of the scale while, at the venues selling tickets at 3d, the admission price to see the film was a quarter of the price of the theatre.¹⁵⁶ Some venues sold a British Gaumont-issued souvenir of the performance with reproductions of Forbes-Robertson's portrait priced at 3d in place of the 1s novelisation offered at the New Gallery Kinema.¹⁵⁷ The company therefore attempted to produce merchandise, and cinema managers attempted to sell tickets, at a price that was affordable to a wide range of budgets rather than targeting only a certain consumer profile.

Calculating affordability of a commodity for an individual is difficult owing to the number of variables involved, such as how expensive the area in which they live is, household expenses, and the number of people dependent on the wage, but a crude calculation illustrates how much more affordable the cinema was than the theatre for this particular event. Using the calculations by Arthur Bowley, and taking the mean average wage in the UK in 1913 as £50.6 per annum (equivalent to approximately £4,862 in 2018), results in an average wage of almost 19s per

¹⁵⁴ The exclusive rights for the film in the UK went to Provincial Cinematograph Theatres, Ltd. who, having formed in November 1909, were the principal cinema company in London and across the country (H. B. Montgomery, 'Kinematograph Finance in 1913', in *Kinematograph Year Book Diary and Directory* (London: The Kinematograph & Lantern Weekly, 1914), pp. 17-21).

¹⁵⁵ 'Notices', *Reading Observer*, 11 October 1913, p. 4; 'Gallery Kinema', *Eastbourne Gazette*, 8 October 1913, p. 4; 'The Picture House, Sackville Street', *Dublin Daily Express*, 27 September 1913, p. 2; and 'Entertainments', *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 7 October 1913, p. 2. The amounts listed are all prices for adult tickets.

¹⁵⁶ p. 35.

¹⁵⁷ 'The Picture House', *Belfast News-Letter*, 30 September 1913, p. 11.

week.¹⁵⁸ Of course, there would have been a significantly higher number of lower-wage earners, such as the Forbes-Robertson fan Ida Stace considered in Chapter 1 who, as a school governess, would have been unlikely to earn as much as £50.6 per annum.¹⁵⁹ The cheapest ticket for Drury Lane would therefore have cost more than 5% of the average weekly wage, without factoring in the cost of transport. A far greater proportion of the population would have been able to justify the lower cost of a ticket to the cinema – 1.25% of the average weekly wage – than the theatre ticket.

The diversity of prices reflects the industry's conditions at the time. Cinema managers were compelled to fill the seats in their auditoriums in order to recuperate the financial investment in purchasing a film. In the 1910s exclusive films were rare; the norm at the time was still open-market rentals, where films were available for sale to all of the hiring companies (i.e. distributors). Exclusives, where only one hiring company in a given area could obtain the film (usually hiring it from the production company rather than buying it), had first been tried in the UK in 1910 and were still rare even in 1913. There were two kinds of exclusive film: the 'special' or 'aristocratic', or the 'ordinary' or 'short'. *Hamlet* belonged to the former, which were 'chiefly defined by their exceptional lengths, high production costs and corresponding rental tariffs'. For such exclusives, Burrows (2017) explains, renters paid 'eye-watering sums' and thus smaller cinemas could not afford to exhibit such films.¹⁶⁰ Even those with the means of purchasing special or aristocratic exclusives then had to compete with other cinemas exhibiting cheaper films at cheaper prices.

According to Ball, the manager of the Cinema House, Rye Lane, Peckham, advertised *Hamlet* by having 'a suitably dressed melancholy Dane outside the theatre, lost in the contemplation of Yorick's skull'.¹⁶¹ This is an example of the iconic scene haunting the play and the film, and also shows how the cinema used a form of street theatre to advertise a filming of a

¹⁵⁸ Arthur L. Bowley, *The Change in the Distribution of the National Income, 1880-1913* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/changeindistribu00bowluoft>.

¹⁵⁹ Newspaper advertisements typically display salaries for school governesses, or supplementary teachers at £30 to £35, although in 1904 average salaries had reportedly ranged from £30 to £45 ('Situations Vacant', *Gloucester Journal*, 17 May 1913, p. 6; 'Professional', *Western Gazette*, 29 August 1913, p. 7; 'Governesses' Holidays', *London Daily News*, 25 June 1904, p. 9).

¹⁶⁰ pp. 191-192.

¹⁶¹ p. 193.

play in a competitive marketplace for public entertainments. While it has not yet been possible to pinpoint when *Hamlet* was exhibited at this cinema, assuming it was shown in the first few months after its release, it is likely that the manager Ball describes was Harry James Brett who, in July 1913, was described in *The Bioscope* as having shown ‘great enterprise’ as a cinema manager.¹⁶² The local cinema competitors made it necessary for Brett to be enterprising; there were eight picture theatres within a quarter-mile radius in Peckham and, in November 1913, the LCC heard opposition to the proposals for the building of a sixth cinema on Rye Lane on the grounds of congestion on the street. According to *The Bioscope*’s Rambler, there were fourteen cinemas in the wider area within walking distance in 1912, each with its own unique selling points.¹⁶³ Given its population of 93,038 in the 1901 Census, Peckham’s cinemas had to vie for patronage, especially considering the high seating capacity of some of the auditoriums (The Queen’s Hall on High Street, for instance, held 950 seats).¹⁶⁴ This example illustrates how, once the rights to a film were sold outright, Forbes-Robertson and Gaumont-Hepworth devolved the responsibilities of marketing and advertising to cinemas. The disadvantage of this was that the celebrity had little control of what was disseminated, but the advantage was that the cinemas were doing the work for them and reaching out to a new public.

The reception of *Hamlet* by this film-going public was conflicting. Newspapers reported the popularity of the film at the New Gallery Kinema – after the first week of the film exhibition the *Pall Mall Gazette* estimated that ‘over 12,000 persons have visited the theatre, and the bookings are stated to be well over the average’ and after another week *The Globe* reported that over 26,000 people had seen the film at that venue alone.¹⁶⁵ Low Warren referenced the film as one of the most notable cinema events of the year in the *Kinematograph Year Book*.¹⁶⁶ In terms of patronage and historical significance, it therefore appears to have been successful. However, reports of the success of the product were contradictory. *The Hendon & Finchley Times* hailed it

¹⁶² ‘South Eastern Electric Theatres Ltd.’, *Bioscope*, 24 July 1913, p. 239.

¹⁶³ ‘With the Metropolitan Showman’, *Bioscope*, 11 January 1912, p. 111; ‘L.L.C. Licensing Affairs’, *Bioscope*, 20 November 1913, p. 761; and ‘In Suburbia’, *Bioscope*, 13 June 1912, p. 801.

¹⁶⁴ GB Historical GIS/ University of Portsmouth, Peckham SubD though time | Population Statistics | Total Population, *A Vision of Britain through Time*.

http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10565820/cube/TOT_POP. Accessed: 7 April 2019.

¹⁶⁵ ‘The New Gallery Kinema’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 September 1913, p. 7; and ‘Native labour on the Rand’, *Globe*, 7 October 1913, p. 9.

¹⁶⁶ ‘Important Film Subjects of the Year,’ in *Kinematograph Year Book Diary and Directory* (London: The Kinematograph & Lantern Weekly, 1914), pp. 30-32.

as ‘the most complete artistic picture which has, so far, been seen on the cinematograph’.¹⁶⁷ *The Globe* said it was

admirably arranged, and although, of course, it is manifestly impossible to realise on the picture screen anything of the spirit of the drama, the film conveys an excellent idea of Sir J. Forbes Robertson’s treatment of the play and of his well-known interpretation of the part of Hamlet.¹⁶⁸

Contrarily, the Lantern Man for the *Yorkshire Evening Post* opined it as ‘a very tedious affair, enough to make any student of Shakespeare shudder’.¹⁶⁹ The crux of the debate was whether the production was a filmed stage production, or an appropriation of the stage production onto film.

Ball asserted that, following the success of the Drury Lane Farewell Season, there was ‘a desire to make some permanent record of his *Hamlet* and to make some money out of it’, yet the film was not a copy of the performance as seen on the stage.¹⁷⁰ Hepworth claimed that a successful film adaptation of a stage-play required more than photographing the performance, rendering it a signifier of an event rather than a replica of the event.¹⁷¹ During the week of the film’s premier, *The Bioscope* suggested that

the main interest of this production must inevitably lie in the fact that it perpetuates, as far as it is possible to do so by mechanical means, Forbes-Robertson’s wonderful study of Hamlet – a performance which has become historic, and which is too well known to need any further praise.¹⁷²

This intention is evident from the opening of the film when Forbes-Robertson is introduced dressed as Hamlet in the emblematic shots with accompanying titles that read, ‘MY TABLES – MEET IT IS, I SET IT DOWN’ and Elliott dressed as Ophelia with the quotation, ‘THERE’S ROSEMARY. THAT’S FOR REMEMBRANCE’. Buchanan (2009) observes that this serves to introduce the stars, but also that the film is ‘self-consciously a memorial document that ‘sets down’, as is ‘meet’, a remarkable *thing remembered* – in this case a stage performance of *Hamlet*’.¹⁷³ The performers do not break out of character during this introduction – Hamlet sits writing, ‘setting down’ notes, while Elliott offers flowers to the viewer. These shots create an

¹⁶⁷ ‘Hampstead Picture Playhouse’, *Hendon & Finchley Times*, 7 November 1913, p. 8.

¹⁶⁸ “‘Hamlet’ on the Film”, *Globe*, 24 September 1913, p. 4.

¹⁶⁹ The ‘Lantern Man’, ‘In Pictureland’, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 25 September 1913, p. 4.

¹⁷⁰ p. 188.

¹⁷¹ p. 118.

¹⁷² “‘Hamlet’”, *Bioscope*, 25 September 1913, p. 982.

¹⁷³ p. 158.

aura of fidelity to the stage version rather than actually providing evidence of fidelity to the stage version. The staging had to be substantially altered for the film as the film's 'stage' was narrow so had to make more use of depth.

While critics praised aspects of the film for their pictorial qualities, the criticisms appear to have been levied at the film format for its inadequacy to reproduce Shakespeare's drama. As Smith (2000) notes, the film was 'marketed through the glories of its previous stage life and the impeccable theatrical reputation of its star', and yet it was the theatrical elements of the film that were censured.¹⁷⁴ The division lay between the indoor and the outdoor scenes, and also the scenes in which Forbes-Robertson appeared, and those he did not. In its analysis *The Bioscope* deduced that

the fact that Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson was to appear therein increased the difficulty, as well as the importance, of the enterprise, because it prevented any too marked departures from the 'legitimate' acting version of the play, lest the great actor's famous performance should be inadequately or imperfectly represented. [...] When one considers this 'Hamlet' as a film-play adapted from Shakespeare, and not as a vehicle for perpetuating an actor's genius, matters are somewhat different, because there is no doubt that the *story* might have been told in a much more interesting manner.¹⁷⁵

In the scenes focussing on Forbes-Robertson there was a tendency to maintain a respectful distance, as if the close proximity of the camera might impede the titled actor's ability to perform.

Hepworth attested that Forbes-Robertson was aware of the necessity to modify his acting style for the camera, but that he needed convincing of the need for close-ups (the only close-ups in the existing film are of the application of poison to the rapier and the wine). The production team reconstructed a mock Elsinore Castle from canvas and plaster at Lulworth Cove for the shooting of the exterior scenes on the ramparts and the sighting of the ghost, who appeared by the use of double exposure. In the scenes that did not feature Forbes-Robertson, the production team were able to take artistic liberties. Hepworth described the necessity

to interpolate all sorts of scenes, visualising episodes which are merely described in the play. The Queen's explanation that she has seen Ophelia gathering flowers by the side of a glassy stream is, for instance, quite useless for the purpose of the silent pictorial version; we had to show the incident in actuality.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷⁴ p. 47.

¹⁷⁵ 'Hamlet', *Bioscope*, 25 September 1913, p. 982.

¹⁷⁶ pp. 118-119.

The shots pan to depict Ophelia walking along the brook picking flowers and were cross-cut with scenes of Laertes and Claudius plotting. These scenes displayed more technical versatility than the scenes inside the castle where the camera was (generally) stationary. Thus, everything peripheral to the protagonist was altered for film, and therefore, rather than a memorial of a performance, the film was an homage to the Forbes-Robertson *Hamlet*, rather than the Forbes-Robertson *Hamlet*.

Nonetheless, Forbes-Robertson brought his ghosts from Drury Lane to the film studio. Hepworth narrated that they used the scenery painted by Hawes Craven (1837-1910) for Forbes-Robertson's staged production as the model for their set and created realistic models, including specific reference to the 'huge carved Norman columns 2 ft. 6 ins. in diameter'.¹⁷⁷ Forbes-Robertson's ghosts haunted the set – Hawes Craven had painted not only Forbes-Robertson's scenery, but also Irving's. When Forbes-Robertson tackled *Hamlet* in 1897, he had successfully borrowed Irving's reputation to create an intertext between their productions and celebrities. However, Irving's theatrical influence proved less beneficial for the new medium as the theatre's haunting presence appears to have been its weakness. While discussing the film's deficiencies, Ball claimed that the

interior shots are more theatrical than cinematic, though the area of action is even more confined than it would be behind the proscenium arch, and there is no sense of depth. [...] The properties are few, chairs, table, lectern, fur rugs

and went on to note how Forbes-Robertson almost tripped on the rugs.¹⁷⁸ These theatrical props interfered with the flow of the drama rather than adding authenticity to the scenes, and were a tacit reminder of the performance as something acted.

The dominance of the chairs in the interior scenes strikes a discord with the realism Hepworth was striving for. Rayner discusses the singular significance of chairs, as 'readable objects of culture'. As a holder of bodies, chairs indicate social status, pedigree, and history, while an empty chair serves as a reminder of who has sat there previously and anticipates who is yet to sit there. She additionally contends that 'chairs can trace dramatic history'.¹⁷⁹ Figs 2.14 and 2.15 are stills from the film that depict the two wooden chairs that appear in repeated scenes

¹⁷⁷ Hepworth, p. 119.

¹⁷⁸ p. 198.

¹⁷⁹ pp. 111-112.

within the castle, but in different scenes which are supposed to be in different rooms. For instance, Hamlet sits contemplating his father's death and his mother's marriage to Claudius before the arrival of Horatio, Polonius uses one of the chairs when he speaks to Laertes and Ophelia, Ophelia sits crying in the chair as Hamlet discovers the King and Polonius eavesdropping, and the chairs also appear in Gertrude's bedroom when she is confronted by her son. The repeated appearance and staging of the chairs breaks the illusion of this being a real castle with decorated rooms, while any viewer who had seen *Hamlet* on stage may have also recognised the chair on the screen as that from the theatre. As can be seen in Hawes Craven's illustration of Act III Scene 4 (Gertrude's bedroom) that appeared in the published edition of *Hamlet* used by Forbes-Robertson in 1897 (Fig 2.16), the same style of chairs, if not the same chairs, also furnished his stage version. Moreover, chairs of the same style feature in the statue of Irving as Hamlet situated in the Guildhall Art Gallery (Fig 2.17) and a postcard of Irving as Hamlet (Fig 2.18). It must be recalled that in 1897 Irving gifted some of his *Hamlet* props to Forbes-Robertson, so it may even be that he used the exact same chairs. The chairs can be read as a signifier of the ghostly presence of Irving's performance – the ghosts of the people and objects that create celebrity haunt the celebrity, and therefore the film as a memorial doubled as a site of memory, not only of Forbes-Robertson, but also of Forbes-Robertson and his ghosts.



Fig 2.14: Still from *Hamlet* (1913) – Queen Gertrude greets Hamlet.

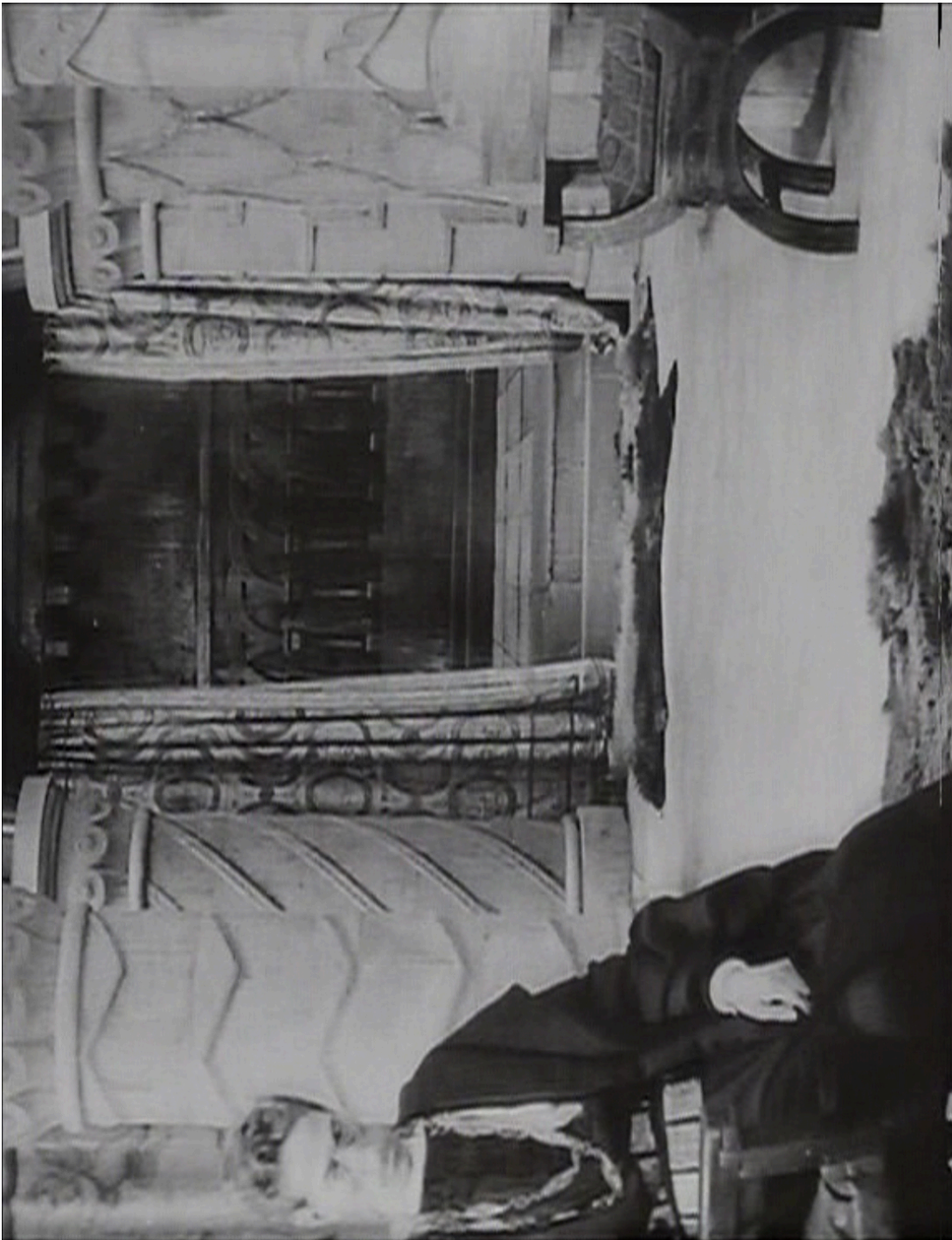


Fig 2.15: Still from *Hamlet* (1913) – Hamlet sits in a chair contemplating his father’s death and his mother’s marriage to Claudius.

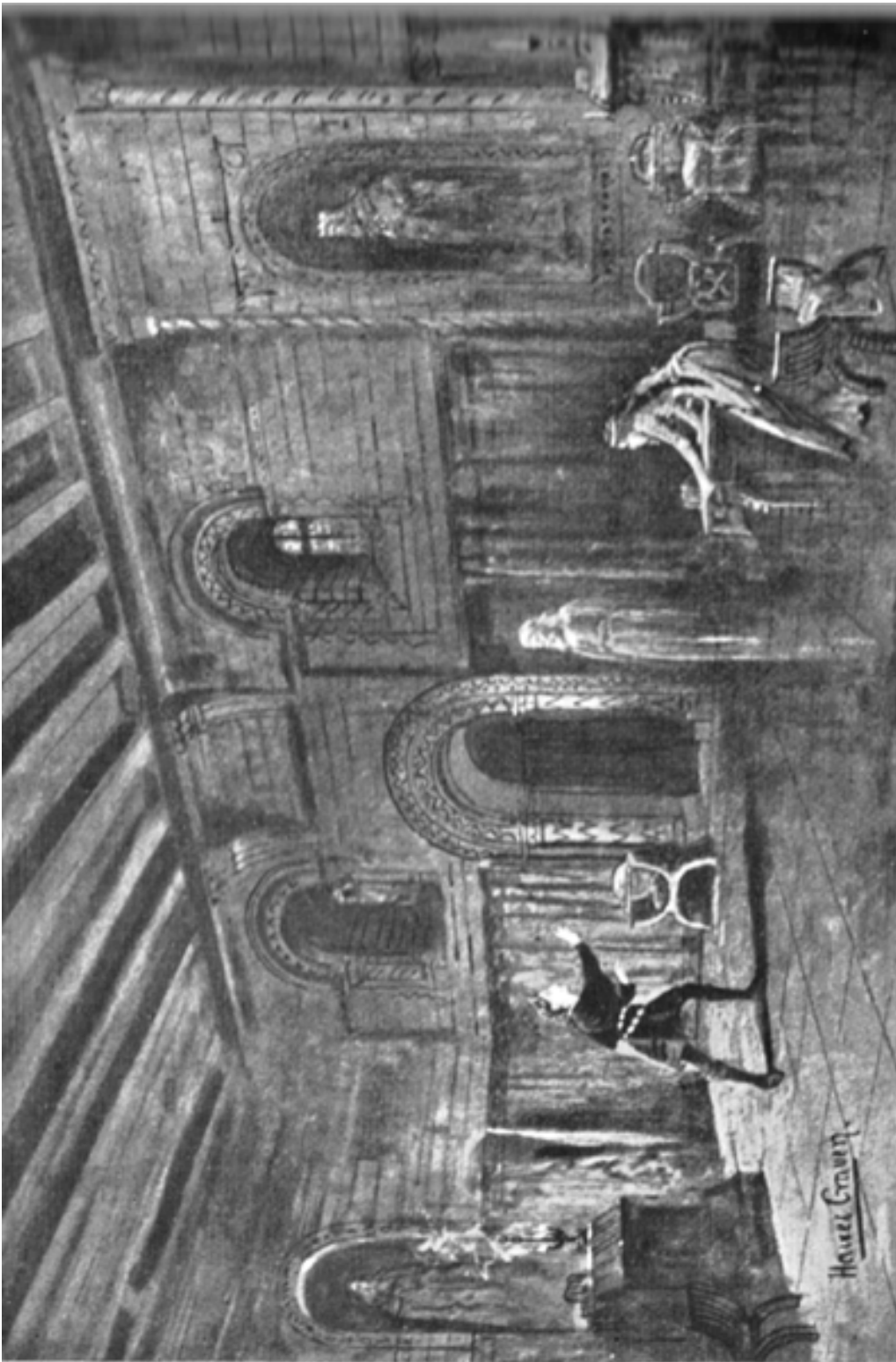


Fig 2.16: Act III Scene 4, Hamlet sees his father's ghost in his mother's bedroom. Illustration by Hawes Craven (1897).¹⁸⁰

¹⁸⁰ *Hamlet*, by William Shakespeare as arranged for the stage by Forbes Robertson and Presented at The Lyceum Theatre on Saturday, September 11, 1897 (London: The Nassau Press, 1897), p. 69.



Fig 2.17: *Statue of Henry Irving as Hamlet* by Edward Onslow Ford (1883).¹⁸¹

¹⁸¹ marble, Guildhall Art Gallery, London,
<http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/b952b446.html> [accessed 1 May 2019].



Fig 2.18: Postcard portraying Henry Irving as Hamlet from photogravure by Edwin Longsdon Long (1880).¹⁸²

There may have been a desire to preserve Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet on film for educational purposes. As one of the leading actor-managers at a time when there was only a

¹⁸² Goupil & Co, 1880, *Sir Henry Irving*, photograph after Edwin Longsdon Long photogravure, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw194708/Sir-Henry-Irving?LinkID=mp02373&search=sas&sText=henry+irving&displayNo=60&wPage=1&role=sit&rNo=100>. [accessed 1 May 2019].

modicum of training opportunities available for new recruits to the stage, Forbes-Robertson assumed a pedagogical role for the theatrical community (as Chapter 4 discusses). In a letter to Shaw dated 27 May 1918, Forbes-Robertson asks permission to publish the letter (should he find it) that Shaw had sent him in 1897 with advice on how to play Hamlet, claiming that it could prove useful for a ‘future Dane’.¹⁸³ In this sense the film, like the letter, can be seen as instructive or educational – an advert for the film at Queen’s Hall in Newcastle labelled it as the ‘Greatest Historical, Educational and Dramatic British Film ever produced’.¹⁸⁴ As a memorial, it also appears to have been successful. On 24 April 1960, the National Film Theatre presented a programme titled ‘Shakespeare Without Words’ during which scenes from the *Hamlet* film were screened from a copy donated by Forbes-Robertson’s son-in-law, Frederick George Miles (1903-1976).¹⁸⁵ Therefore, its status in theatrical and cinematic history, and the image of Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet, has been remembered.

2.7 Purpose of the Film

The statement that the film was a memorial to Forbes-Robertson’s career leads to the assumption that its release signified a farewell to his public life. At the end of Forbes-Robertson’s speech after the final production of *Hamlet* at Drury Lane on 6 June, he reportedly said, ‘I bid you all farewell. It is really my farewell. And yet I will not say that now. I would rather say just frankly, God bless you, and good-night’.¹⁸⁶ Smith analyses Forbes-Robertson’s delayed goodbye to his audience as an allusion to his immortality on film when they would see him again, confirmed by the announcement a few days later of his intention to make a film of his performance (announcements did appear in *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly* and *The Bioscope* on 12 June).¹⁸⁷ This may have been the official announcement, but the press was already aware of the film – *The Leeds Mercury* announced the film as early as 3 May. *The Bioscope* printed an interview with the playwright, Cecil Raleigh (1856-1814), on the subject of theatrical stars appearing on screen on 15 May. Raleigh is quoted saying, ‘[A]s no doubt you know, Mr. Forbes

¹⁸³ Add MS 50534, G. B. Shaw Papers: Series 1, Vol. XXVII (ff. 216). BL.

¹⁸⁴ ‘Queen’s Hall’, *Evening Chronicle*, 26 September 1913, p. 1.

¹⁸⁵ ‘Silent Film of 1913 Brings Back a Great Hamlet’, *Times*, 25 April 1960, p. 16.

¹⁸⁶ Smith, (2000), p. 46.

¹⁸⁷ *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly* quoted in Ball, p. 188; and ‘Our View’, *Bioscope*, 12 June 1913, p. 773.

Robertson is going to be filmed shortly in his wonderful impersonation of “Hamlet.”¹⁸⁸ News had even reached the USA at least a week ahead of the film trade newspaper announcements on 12 June as *Moving Picture World* announced it on 7 June and, as the magazine was printed a week before its cover date, the staff would have known about the film even earlier.¹⁸⁹ From Forbes-Robertson’s correspondence with Blossom (quoted above), it transpires that they had already started filming at the studio by 11 June.

The following chapter illustrates how Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity functioned to endorse the film industry, but his biography hints at his private opinion towards films:

One cannot but regret the many highly gifted men with the true dramatic *flair* who are absorbed by the lighter forms of entertainment. These in the old days found comparatively little outlet for their genius except on the legitimate stage, and so were saved to it. The amount of talent among British performers in general is prodigious, and the rivalry of the musical and variety theatres and kindred entertainments to the Drama is only detrimental in so far as they rob her of many who might otherwise have been her votaries.¹⁹⁰

There is therefore an accepted assumption that Forbes-Robertson was lured by the prospect of easy money to make the film, and British Gaumont were the recipients of his brand and social prestige. Upon the release of *Hamlet*, the ‘Lantern Man’ reported in the *Yorkshire Evening Post*, ‘Our best actors, our most popular actors, are finding that the shadow shapes reveal shekels’.¹⁹¹ Both the *Pall Mall Gazette* and *Motography* record that Gaumont ‘persuaded’ him to appear in front of the camera and ‘Messrs. Gaumont have had to pay Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson a very high price for the film’.¹⁹² The language used in modern scholarship indicates the presumption that Gaumont were the active pursuers of Forbes-Robertson’s cultural capital; for example, Burrows suggests that Forbes-Robertson ‘consent[ed] to act before the camera’.¹⁹³ This emphasis on the benefits for the film company reflects the inference that Forbes-Robertson was lured by the financial incentive. However, as this chapter demonstrates, his recent theatre seasons in the UK and the US had been lucrative and he already had plans in place for his return to the US. *The Referee* reported that for his final two weeks in San Francisco in December 1911, he had a £5,000 booking (equivalent to £500,200 in 2018, although it is not clear how much he personally would

¹⁸⁸ ‘Author and the Cinematograph’, *Bioscope*, 15 May 1913, p. 463.

¹⁸⁹ ‘Rose Theater, High Point, N. C.’, *Moving Picture World*, 7 June 1913, p. 1017.

¹⁹⁰ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), pp. 211-212.

¹⁹¹ The ‘Lantern Man’, ‘In Pictureland’, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 25 September 1913, p. 4.

¹⁹² “‘Hamlet’ on the Screen”, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 September 1913, p. 7; and ‘Forbes-Robertson’s “Hamlet”’, *Motography*, 26 July 1913, p. 66.

¹⁹³ Burrows, (2003), p. 3.

have received).¹⁹⁴ Therefore, if he viewed the new medium with antipathy and a hindrance to the theatre industry, the prospect of £2,000 for three weeks' work is unlikely to have been a major incentive. As this chapter has demonstrated, Burton actively manipulated the Forbes-Robertson brand during the Farewell Season. It is possible to read the whole season as a string of events – plays, publicity, dinners, and demonstrations – that punctuated his celebrity. It is therefore also possible that, if Forbes-Robertson did have to be persuaded to be filmed, this persuasion was carried out not by Gaumont but by his manager, and that the film was brought about at Forbes-Robertson and Burton's instigation as part of their on-going series of media events and marketing schemes. Just as the *As You Like It* performance at the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre had marketing benefits for Anderson's tour of the US in 1885 (discussed in Chapter 1), so Forbes-Robertson's film of *Hamlet* can be seen as a springboard for his US Farewell. The benefit of the film was that it had the ability to travel and advertise upcoming theatre dates. The project therefore reciprocally benefitted reputations – Gaumont received use of his brand, and Forbes-Robertson sought a wider public for his celebrity.

There were practical reasons behind the desire to expand his celebrity profile even after announcing his farewell. In his autobiography, Forbes-Robertson claimed that he had concluded in 1912 that he should 'take [his] farewell of the stage' (not retire), but that Burton estimated that it would take four years to complete a farewell of England, Scotland, Canada, and America.¹⁹⁵ In 1912, the *Pall Mall Gazette* publicised his (original) farewell plans that included performing in Paris and Berlin, meaning he had to maintain the momentum of previous years and continue to expand his celebrity profile.¹⁹⁶ The onset of war confused his plans and obfuscates an analysis of his intentions following the UK Farewell, but (as Chapter 3 discusses) he had already used his celebrity for activist and philanthropic causes, and (as Chapter 4 discusses) he was committed to the improvement of the theatre profession. He would also go on to give a series of lectures (possibly inspired by the success of his niece, Beatrice),¹⁹⁷ and publish his memoirs. Therefore, his retirement from the stage did not mean he intended to retire from public life. Additionally, as the newspapers emphasised and Forbes-Robertson even took the opportunity in his farewell

¹⁹⁴ 'Dramatic Gossip', *Referee*, 7 January 1912, p. 3.

¹⁹⁵ p. 268.

¹⁹⁶ 'Mr. Forbes Robertson's Next English Season', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 January 1912, p. 4.

¹⁹⁷ She had success in the US giving lectures having been first engaged in September 1910 by a Mr. Erskine Ely in New York who promised her she could earn more giving lectures than acting (Fitzmaurice, p. 355.)

speech at Drury Lane to say, Elliott was not to retire from the stage along with her husband.¹⁹⁸ Chapter 3 discusses her prominent role in the fight for women's suffrage and also the managerial role she assumed for the Shakespeare Hut. In 1918 she started managing her own company, followed its successful seasons with tours in South Africa in 1921 and 1922, and also of Australia and New Zealand in 1923 and 1924. If it were not for the War she may have gone into management earlier, like her sister, Maxine Elliott. Although she maintained her stage name of Gertrude Elliott throughout her career, she was often referred to as Lady Forbes-Robertson and benefitted from the brand. The Gaumont-Hepworth venture was therefore not merely inspired by the Farewell Season; it coincided with it and was an extension of the occasion. The film may have marked an end to Forbes-Robertson playing Hamlet (in the UK), but it did not mark an end to the Forbes-Robertson celebrity. In this sense, the film is not the end of a career, but was part of a major retirement project. It was another promotional item akin to posters, photographs, and newspaper notices, that showcased and built his profile at the height of his celebrity, comparable, for instance, to the exhibition of Harcourt's painting at the Royal Exhibition and Forbes-Robertson's knighthood.

2.8 The Ghost of Hamlet

Following Forbes-Robertson's success in 1897 with *Hamlet*, his public persona merged with the role and Hamlet haunted his celebrity. Subsequently, when Forbes-Robertson played in other roles they had the ghosts of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity and the ghost of his Hamlet, creating layers of, sometimes conflicting, identity. Inspired by his Hamlet, Shaw wrote *Caesar and Cleopatra* (1898) for Forbes-Robertson (and, initially, Campbell) as a celebrity vehicle play which would display his meritorious traits in full advantage. However, not all of Forbes-Robertson's future roles would be compatible with the impression Hamlet left on his celebrity profile.

The *Pall Mall Gazette* framed his attempt to deviate from roles similar to Hamlet in a positive way:

The public are always prone to idolise the actor and to let his art be merged in his personality. Sir JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON has avoided the pitfalls of that hero-

¹⁹⁸ She did not accompany him on his second farewell tour of the US as she was pregnant with their fourth daughter, Diana, to whom she gave birth on 14 December 1914.

worship, and the ensuing faults by which the typical actor-manager is liable to be compromised. He has striven to adapt his flexible genius to the requirements of the highest drama—not to circumscribe his ambition by the safe and congenial scope of his own powers.¹⁹⁹

The article refers to Forbes-Robertson in the roles of Macbeth, Othello, and Shylock, which were not generally appreciated as Hamlet had been, chiefly because his celebrity persona was incompatible with the malevolence perceived in these characters. Beatrice Forbes-Robertson argued that ‘[w]hile Johnston’s Macbeth was much praised it was never comparably as popular as his hamlet [*sic*], because – apart from the fact that not [*sic*] Macbeth ever is – the public did not like their well-loved star to appear either bad, or bearded’.²⁰⁰ The press appears to have concurred with this assertion. According to *The Globe*:

All the qualities, as a man, which have won for Mr. Forbes Robertson so warm a place in the heart of the playgoer; all the gifts as an actor, which have made him popular, are qualities and capacities which singularly unfit him to play the Jew in “The Merchant of Venice.” It is not a question of histrionic capacity; it is a sheer matter of personality, and the personality which has counted for so much is inimical to Shylock.²⁰¹

Similarly, *The Daily Herald* argues that his

impersonation of Othello lies open to the same criticism as that of Shylock; fineness of diction and nobility of movement are there, but for some reason or other the actor fails to identify himself entirely with the part he is playing. It is not the revengeful Jew and the jealous Moor we see on the stage, but Mr. Forbes-Robertson playing these parts.²⁰²

These examples suggest that the merging of Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity persona with his characterisation of Hamlet created a tension between the actor and his new roles. However, the *Illustrated London News* also alludes to the presence of the ghost of Hamlet: ‘it cannot be said that as Othello, any more than as Shylock, the most charming of modern Hamlets shows to very great advantage’.²⁰³ A successful role for Forbes-Robertson was therefore one that foregrounded the qualities of his Hamlet.

¹⁹⁹ ‘The Service of Art’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 June 1913, p. 6.

²⁰⁰ Fitzmaurice, p. 200.

²⁰¹ ‘The Theatre’, *Globe*, 6 May 1913, p. 6.

²⁰² “‘Othello’ at the Lake’, *Daily Herald*, 21 May 1913, p. 3.

²⁰³ ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s “Othello” Revival’, *Illustrated London News*, 24 May 1913, p. 2.

2.9 The Stranger

The role of Hamlet afforded Forbes-Robertson cultural legitimacy because he demonstrated that he had mastered a revered and challenging part, but it was his portrayal of the Stranger from Jerome's *Passing* that gave him widespread popularity and proved to be his most lucrative role. In Spring 1908, Forbes-Robertson was touring Henry James's (1843-1916) *The High Bid* (which premiered in Edinburgh on 26 March 1908) and intended to play it in London in Autumn 1908. Reviewers thought the play had too much dialogue but James was not prepared to alter his script. Additionally, Babette May Levy (1947) described that, in *The High Bid*, Elliott had the more aggrandised role (as Mrs. Gracedew) than Forbes-Robertson did (as Captain Yule) – a part that did not 'demonstrate fully his remarkable acting ability'.²⁰⁴ Forbes-Robertson's biography describes how, after hearing Jerome read the play to him and Elliott, they were both 'in love with the high motive of the play'.²⁰⁵ They tested the play at the Opera House in Harrogate on 13 August 1908, and opened at St. James's (sub-let to him while Alexander toured his repertoire) on 1 September in place of *The High Bid*.²⁰⁶

Jerome adapted the play into three acts from his existing short story, but there is little overall plot as all the action (or lack of) takes place in one boarding house where each of the boarders has his/her own story.²⁰⁷ The motto of *Passing* is 'I will seek thy good' and the play is essentially a pastiche of moral messages and aphorisms – as demonstrated in the article from *Vancouver Daily World* that lists a 'motto for every day of the month' lifted from the play (Fig 2.19). As a modern morality story, it immediately divided opinions. For example, *The Hull Daily Mail* wrote, 'The whole thing is just a plain man's sermon put plainly on the stage; that is all, and that is excellent', while *The Graphic* opined, 'There is very little drama in the play, but much preaching and a very strong element of monotony'.²⁰⁸ Max Beerbohm claimed it was a 'vilely

²⁰⁴ "'The High Bid" and the Forbes-Robertsons', *College English*, 8(6), 1947, pp. 284–292, www.jstor.org/stable/370719, pp. 290-291.

²⁰⁵ p. 252.

²⁰⁶ They did eventually play *The High Bid* in London on 18 February 1909 at His Majesty's Theatre for five matinees. Critics praised the play, but it could not compete with the financial success of *Passing*.

²⁰⁷ 'Drama of the Day', *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 6 August 1908, p. 14; 'Provincial Productions', *Stage*, 20 August 1908, p. 17.

²⁰⁸ 'Mr J. K. Jerome's New Play', *Hull Daily Mail*, 2 September 1908, p. 3; 'A New Play, "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" At the St. James's', *Graphic*, 5 September 1908, p. 18

stupid' play and called Jerome a 'tenth-rate writer'.²⁰⁹ Despite the sceptics, by 24 August 1909 following its opening at Leeds Grand Theatre, the *Yorkshire Evening Post* reported Forbes-Robertson calling the play his 'Monte Carlo' – i.e. the play that brought him his fortunes.²¹⁰ From 1909 to 1912 he toured the single play (in Autumn 1909 *Passing* ran for 216 performances at Maxine Elliott Theatre in New York), so that by 7 May 1912 *Western Daily Mercury* reported that Forbes-Robertson had performed the play over 750 times in the USA, and over 1,000 times overall. It also reported that, having covered 30,000 miles, 34 states, and 75 cities in six months, it had broken the record for the longest theatrical tour. Forbes-Robertson's profits are not mentioned, but it stated that Jerome took \$2,000 (equivalent to £42,600 in 2018) per week in royalties.²¹¹ By the time marketing began for Herbert Brenon's (1880-1958) film version of the play in 1917, *The Bioscope* estimated Forbes-Robertson had performed the play 1,300 times.²¹² *Variety* detailed that he earned a fixed weekly sum of \$8,000 for the filming (equivalent to £126,000 in 2018), while *The Exhibitors Herald* reported that he received \$50,000 overall (equivalent to £786,000 in 2018) for the two months of filming in Brenon's studio in New Jersey (for which Forbes-Robertson sailed to New York especially in Autumn 1917).²¹³

²⁰⁹ 'The Passing of the Third Floor Back', *Saturday Review*, 5 September 1908, in *Around Theatres*, ed. by Max Beerbohm (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953), p. 667.

²¹⁰ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), pp. 252-253; 'Mr. Forbes-Robertson in Leeds', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 24 August 1909, p. 5. It may also be noteworthy that the success of this play coincided with Forbes-Robertson engaging Percy Burton to his management team ('Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 27 February 1909, p. 16).

²¹¹ 'Mr. and Mrs. Forbes-Robertson', *Western Daily Mercury*, 7 May 1912, p. 6.

²¹² 'The Bioscope', *Bioscope*, 2 November 1916, p. 15. It was five reels long and distributed by Walturdaw in the UK.

²¹³ '\$8,000 Weekly for Sir Forbes', *Variety*, December 1917, p. 46; 'Forbes-Robertson Returns to England', *Exhibitors Herald*, 29 December 1917, p. 22; 'First National Buys 'Third Floor Back' Film Through Weber', *Exhibitors Herald*, 20 April 1918, p. 24. Brenon's biographer documents that Brenon was hospitalised due to appendicitis during the filming; it is therefore possible that during this time a slightly lower rate was negotiated with Forbes-Robertson, but regardless, it was handsome remuneration (Ian Graham, *Herbert Brenon: An American Cinema Odyssey* (Independently published, 2017), p.61).

A MOTTO FOR EVERY DAY OF THE MONTH

Words spoken by Forbes-Robertson in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back."

1. I am a wanderer.
2. Women are so wilful, and you kind women are the worst of all.
3. Wherever you are, life shall be a little brighter; dull, tired faces shall be made to smile.
4. It will be pleasant looking back to think that I, perhaps, was of help to you in the beginning.
5. You are young enough not to have forgotten the thoughts of youth; old enough to have learnt pity.
6. A sense of humor is a delightful trait at all times.
7. Ah, it is a fine thing to live—you shall give her life.
8. In the world's book, so full of the vulgar stories of dead love, it is pleasant to come across one with the old fashioned ending.
9. Nothing it seems to me, is more beautiful than the love that has weathered the storms of life.
10. The love of the young for the young—it is the beginning of life. But the love of the old for the old, that is the beginning of things longer.
11. The meeting place of friends is the heart.
12. We must talk of old days—and grow young.
13. Duty so soon tires—love goe all the way.
14. It is the helpless and the fallen that hold in their hands the patents of nobility.
15. Ugliness is but skin deep. The business of art is to reveal the beauty underlying all things.
16. It is a great privilege to be deemed worthy to suffer.
17. It is the thoughts of youth that shall one day make the world young.
18. There are generous fellows who love to share their good fortune with their friends.
19. So many of the noblest men I have known, men I have loved, have been Jews. It is a great race, a race rich in honorable names.
20. What does my lover offer me? Poverty, struggle. Hopes, fears. Pain, joy. Love, life.
21. There are they whose better self lies slain—slain by their own hand, to trouble them no more. But yours, child, you have let it grow too strong. It will ever be your master. You must obey.
22. I know your voice. I hear it in

TRY NATURE'S METHOD TO CURE YOUR COLD

You Don't Need Drugs to Conquer Catarrh and La Grippe.

Colds, catarrh and influenza are the result of poisons in the system. The way to cure them is to drive out the poisons. Drugs have the opposite result.

Virgin oil of pine is the natural curative agent for all ailments of this character. It expels the diseased discharges and heals the affected tissues. It will cure the worst cold inside of twenty-four hours and give speedy and permanent relief to cases of chronic



ST. LOUIS, Jan. 15.—Madame Schur young husband, William Rapp, for divorce the reason for the suit being principally than the man. Rapp is 12 years the div for some time.

"I have not a word to say against M "He is a gentleman and is cultured and way and I mine. He is in New York, I for my children, for I have given my li for my children than I did for him. He he was right. But there were no quarre

the winds, I hear it in the silence of the night.

23. That is what we will tell to the young men—that the fear that keeps men little is the fear of being great.

24. The whole round world, what is it but woman's child—claiming from her tenderness?

25. Ah, you have learned it—that all the best fun in life is giving.

26. All men and women are fair. And some are fairer than others. And they shall be the kinder, having the more to make them kind.

27. No man may accept a gift with honor—save from a friend.

28. Love! She is a woman. And all men may she love—save one. With all men may she dwell—save one; with all men save the coward. It is not poverty, it is the fear of poverty that drives out love.

29. There will come days when the memory of a promise made to a friend may help.

30. You shall give me as a gift this promise—that through all things to the end, you love one another.

31. Leave-takings aMre but wasted sadness. Good-bye! I also am a servant—I have my work.

Fig 2.19: 'A Motto for Every Day of the Month' – words spoken by Forbes-Robertson in *Passing* (1912).²¹⁴

²¹⁴ 'A Motto for Every Day of the Month', *Vancouver Daily World*, 15 January 1912, p. 10.

Following the production of *Passing*, Brenon published his objections to the star system in *Exhibitors Herald*, citing his beliefs in plot and story over celebrity, but made a caveat:

If, however, an artist of world wide reputation is best fitted to a certain type of role, and his name is indissolubly connected with a certain part, I waive the policy of no star and welcome the appearance of the name of that artist in connection with my production. Take, for instance, the case of Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson, [...]. Who can bring to mind the production of 'The Passing of the Third Floor Back,' without conjuring up the mental vision of Sir Johnston in his performance of the Stranger? [... He has] created and developed [his character] until [he] absolutely become[s] essential to the presentation of the play. It is impossible to separate one from the other.²¹⁵

This indicates the active interconnection of celebrity persona and the fictive character. Ahead of the US tours, Forbes-Robertson had anticipated that the play would be successful there because of the strong hold of Christian Science.²¹⁶ Burton elaborated on this:

We did well in the English provinces by appealing to the religiously-minded, [...]. That was my cue for the American tour. On my previous visit to the States I had observed the extraordinary influence of the clergy. [...] So I went to the clergy.

Within the next three years there was no preacher, certainly no preacher of importance, upon whom I did not call or write. I do not blush – much – to admit that I expatiated freely upon the fact that I was myself the son of a clergyman. On the strength of this and also, to be sure, the saccharinely evangelistic tone of Jerome K. Jerome's play, I won the ministers over. Within a week after Forbes-Robertson opened at the Maxine Elliott Theatre in New York no fewer than forty sermons were preached on the subject in and around the metropolis. Congregations were openly urged from the pulpits to attend this "beautiful, reverent and uplifting work." I prevailed upon Robertson to give a special Ministers' Matinee – for parsons only. Enthusiasm for the production amounted to a furore, so far as the many were concerned. Not only Jerome's drama but Forbes-Robertson's impersonation of the Christ-like Stranger was hailed as nothing short of inspired.²¹⁷

Burton also described covering up the story of the arrest of an assistant he had employed in Seattle while Forbes-Robertson was touring *Passing*: 'So there I was, promoting a semi-religious play, appealing to all the clergy on the Pacific coast – and my assistant arrested for a grave statutory crime'.²¹⁸ He recalled spending huge sums of money and speaking to lawyers in order to keep the case out of the papers to prevent brandishing Forbes-Robertson's name. In this respect the reputation of the celebrity particularly fitted the theme and had to be maintained to remain profitable.

²¹⁵ 'Popularity of Star System Rapidly Diminishing', *Exhibitors Herald*, 5 Jan 1918, p. 29

²¹⁶ 'Mr. J. Forbes-Robertson in Leeds', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 24 August 1909, p. 4.

²¹⁷ Thomas, pp. 120-121.

²¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 132.

The success of the play appears to have been courtesy of Forbes-Robertson's central part as the Stranger who suited Forbes-Robertson's reputation for beauty and eloquence. 'Vedette' reported in the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* that the play 'is at its best a preachy business, so monotonous in its moral teaching that nothing could save it from tedium save the beautiful voice and fine elocution of Mr. Forbes-Robertson'.²¹⁹ *The Stage* reported that 'the personality of Mr. Robertson is in no wise sunk, but is a dominating feature' of the play.²²⁰ The roles of Macbeth, Othello, and Shylock, conflicted with the Forbes-Robertson brand, but the Stranger had the hallmarks of his celebrity character (gentlemanly, moral, eloquent) and it can be read as a careful and deliberate performance of his celebrity. Forbes-Robertson was the first actor to play in the role and so it was, essentially, a canvas for his celebrity and, as Brenon alluded to, the part became synonymous with his name.

2.10 Conclusion

The January 1913 supplement to *The Sunday Times* published J. T. Grein's (1862-1935), 'J. Forbes-Robertson. A Prince of his Profession'. Grein's encomium to Forbes-Robertson credited him with being the only 'great' English actor or actress to have performed in Continental Europe, rather than merely as a 'star'. He claimed that it was as Hamlet that Forbes-Robertson earned this reputation: 'this Hamlet was unlike all others. It was a texture of romance and psychology'.²²¹ He fuses Forbes-Robertson's public persona and fictive roles – the use of the word 'prince' in the title to refer to Forbes-Robertson simultaneously alludes to Prince Hamlet. Grein also spoke of Forbes-Robertson's Stranger, in which 'there was all that is fine in the artiste, all that is lovable in the man'. Here, Grein demonstrated how Forbes-Robertson's most famous fictive personalities impacted not only on his persona but also on his other roles. Grein's title references Forbes-Robertson as a prince, but the lexicon of mysticism (referring to Forbes-Robertson's 'pilgrimage' to Berlin and Amsterdam and his mark left there 'as a tradition, as an exquisite memory') is in reverence to the Stranger:

Forbes-Robertson is one of those few artists about whom one cannot write, nor talk, without inspiration. In our thoughts he is more an idea than an entity—he sends us back to

²¹⁹ Vedette, 'Round the Theatres', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 September 1908, p. 5.

²²⁰ 'London Theatres', *Stage*, 3 September 1908, p. 17.

²²¹ J. T. Grein, 'A Prince of His Calling', *Times*, January 1913, repr. in *Bournemouth Graphic*, 7 March 1913, p. 11.

the romantic past of cloisters, of ‘preux Chevaliers,’ of martyrdom, of ballad-mongers and minstrels. But when he acts, the vision materialises into ideal manhood. We feel the man of quality, the thinker, the human being who has lived and suffered and yet loves life and all that it means, the artist, in fine, endowed by the grace of nature.

In this passage the roles of Hamlet (for example, ‘the thinker’) and the Stranger (with the religious connotations of cloisters and martyrdom) fuse and encapsulate Forbes-Robertson’s persona.

An audience had expectations of a Forbes-Robertson production and it is likely that someone going to see *Passing* would know that he was ‘the Hamlet of his generation’ and that he had a long theatrical heritage. Ahead of its opening at the St. James’s, *The Bystander* printed photographs of Elliott and Forbes-Robertson with an article promoting the play (Fig 2.20). While the actors are dressed out of costume for the photograph, Forbes-Robertson sits in a chair reminiscent of the chairs in *Hamlet* and may be a subtle reminder of his success in the part. Similarly, the advertisement in Fig 2.21 promotes the release of *Hamlet* (film) in the USA, but the photograph accompanying the text depicts Forbes-Robertson in his costume for the Stranger. Hamlet can also be seen shaping the personage of the Stranger in Brenon’s film – upon entering the boarding house Forbes-Robertson bows several times to Mrs Sharpe and, when they sit, he offers her the chair by the fire, reminiscent of the bows Hamlet makes to all the occupants of Elsinore Castle (women included) upon his entry there. Additionally, in an interview for *The Referee* in August 1908, H. C. N. (presumably Henry Chance Newton – ‘Carados’) asked Forbes-Robertson about his costume for the role. He replied that he had ordered a coat from the tailor: “‘It will come out something like that,” said Mr. Forbes-Robertson, pointing to a mid-Victorian portrait of his beloved preceptor, the great Samuel Phelps, in the tight-waisted, roller-collar habit of his period’.²²² As Aoife Monks asserts, costume works ‘to frame and reinforce the actor’s own star persona or association with previous roles’.²²³ In a comparison of Brenon’s film with a 1935 version of the film, Gerd Gemünden asserts that the 1918 film was tailored around the celebrity of Forbes-Robertson – indicated by the theatrical appearance of the Stranger so that he stood apart from the ensemble. In contrast, the 1935 Stranger, Conrad Veidt, wore a grey suit and

²²² H. C. N. ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’, *Referee*, 30 August 1908, p. 2.

²²³ Aoife Monks, ‘Introduction’, in *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice* ed. by Ali Maclaurin and Aoife Monks (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan Education, 2015), pp. 1-6, p. 1.

carried a suitcase 'like a travelling salesman'.²²⁴ Veidt, therefore, deviated from the memory of Forbes-Robertson's Stranger who was itself haunted by the Victorian Phelps. *Passing* was Forbes-Robertson's celebrity and money-making vehicle but *Hamlet* was his histrionic feat without which *Passing* would not have been successful as it was built on the prowess of its star in a demanding role and a celebrity with associated theatrical legacy. The brand that Forbes-Robertson had spent his entire career streamlining was heavily indebted to *Hamlet* and the mentors who had influenced its presentation and reception. Even in a brand new part in a play of very different character to *Hamlet*, the presence of Forbes-Robertson was still a signifier of all of this accumulated meaning.

²²⁴ Gerd Gemünden, 'Allegories of Displacement: Conrad Veidt's British Films', in *Destination London: German-speaking Emigrés and British Cinema, 1925-1950*, ed. by Tim Bergfelder and Christian Cargnell (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 142-154, pp. 146-147.

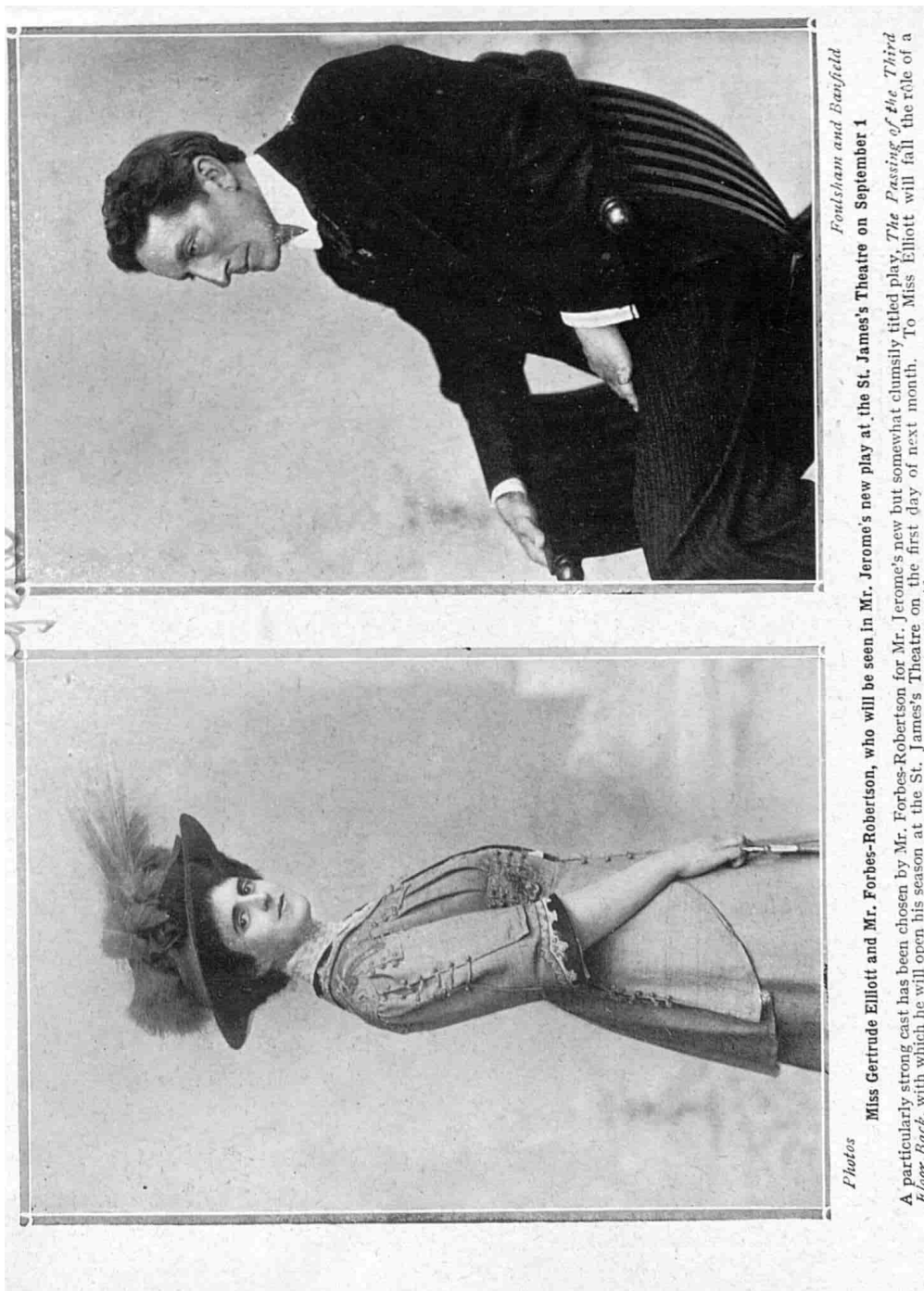


Fig 2.20: Photograph of Elliott and Forbes-Robertson in *The Bystander* ahead of the opening of *Passing* at the St. James's Theatre (1908).²²⁵

²²⁵ 'The Coming Return of Mr. Forbes-Robertson', *Bystander*, 19 August 1908, p. 380.

JULY 7TH

"GREATEST NAMES EVER OFFERED IN THREE REELS"

SIR. J. FORBES ROBERTSON

and GERTRUDE ELLIOTT

SUPPORTED BY THE ENTIRE
DRURY LANE COMPANY
IN

HAMLET



AUGUST 4TH

MARY NASH

DIRECT FROM HER LATEST
BROADWAY SUCCESS IN "SINNERS"

A THREE-REEL BEAUTIFUL

THE TIDES OF TIME



RELEASED JUNE 23rd

RALPH STUART IN "THE KICK-OUT"

"THE KICK-OUT DREW THE BIGGEST
HOUSE WE HAVE HAD IN TWO
WEEKS. A FINE PRODUCTION!"

ALHAMBRA THEATRE
7TH AVE & 126TH ST. N.Y.

REELERS

THE
REGULAR PROGRAM

Star Features

YORK



Fig 2.21: Advert for the forthcoming release of *Hamlet* in USA (1915).²²⁶

²²⁶ 'July 7th', *Motion Picture News*, 17 July 1915, p. 153.

Chapter 3. Meaning Transfer: Celebrity Endorsement, Activism, Politics, and Diplomacy

‘Charity covereth a multitude of farewells.’
- Forbes-Robertson, 1917¹

3.1 Introduction

In Forbes-Robertson’s speech made before the curtain after the final performance of *Hamlet* at Drury Lane on 6 June 1913, he reassured his audience,

Nothing can touch the spoken word upon the stage. The drama is going to be with us always. Do not listen to the pessimists who tell you we have on all sides all sorts of competitors in other forms of entertainment. Nothing can stay the drama.²

He expanded on this theory during an interview with *The Era* on the subject of the screen and the stage in November 1916: ‘I do not think that film exhibitions can ever interfere with the real theatre. Theatrical people have always been crying out that something or other was going to ruin their business’.³ Theatre managers viewed musical comedy and music halls as a threat, yet, he argued, the alternative forms of entertainment actually helped bring new audiences to the legitimate theatre. He then turned to the film as a form of entertainment:

The film is good because it engages more actors and actresses. [...] It is a wonderful form of entertainment, and has done a lot of good, and the only danger is the unscrupulous entertainer who would do the business harm by giving performances of unseemly plays. [...]

‘There is no question—there can be no question—when the people get a comfortable seat to sit in and a roof over their heads for a few pence that they are better in picture palaces than in public-houses or in loitering about the streets.’⁴

The interview was printed ahead of the release of Forbes-Robertson’s second film *Masks and Faces* in May 1917 – a film that he initiated the production of and publicly touted (discussed in Chapter 4). While defending the theatre industry and suggesting that it is a superior form, Forbes-Robertson here acknowledges that there is value in the cinema.

¹ ‘Stage Whispers’, *Sporting Times* (USA), 5 May 1917, p. 3.

² ‘Sir J. Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *The Times*, 7 June 1913, p. 10.

³ ‘The Screen and the Stage’, *Era*, 22 November 1916, p. 18.

⁴ *Ibid.*

In March 1917 the *Aberdeen Evening Express* remarked on the changing attitude of theatre actors towards the cinema over the previous eighteen months. Previously, ‘highbrow’ performers despised the cinema, whereas by 1917 they were ‘tumbling over one another’ to obtain film contracts. The writer opined that

an art which number[ed] among its leading exponents men of the standing of Sir Herbert Tree and Sir Johnstone Forbes-Robertson, cannot be otherwise than respectable, and worthy, therefore, of his gracious patronage and the serious attention of his massive intellect.⁵

This was not necessarily an accurate assessment of the contemporary situation, as Burrows (2003) has explored, the press began to express positive attitudes towards cinema from around 1912, so the shift in attitudes was probably earlier than that reported in the article. From his first appearance on film in *Hamlet* in 1913, Forbes-Robertson loaned the prestige associated with his celebrity brand to the film industry as part of the drive to adapt cultural capital into cinema from 1909 to 1914 (as discussed above). In effect, Forbes-Robertson endorsed the cinema for fellow performers as a legitimate source of employment, and endorsed it for the general public as a respectable form of visual entertainment.

Celebrity endorsement hinges on the idea of meaning transfer – in the case of Forbes-Robertson on film, his public identity packaged in his performance transferred to the film format and was ultimately consumed by the viewer. Having spent the earlier years of his career generating cultural meaning for his name, Forbes-Robertson communicated his brand across society to consumers of celebrity who adopted the properties enveloped in his celebrity persona. The products, places, causes, and politics he championed were the vehicles that could transport this meaning. As discussed in the Introduction, McCracken identifies four cultural foundations of the endorsement process: explicit, implicit, imperative, and copresent. In the film industry, within three years Forbes-Robertson had moved from a copresent form of endorsement (when he agreed to appear in *Hamlet*) to an explicit endorsement (when he suggested filming *Masks and Faces* and publicly acknowledged the benefits of film). McCracken’s model for celebrity endorsement depends upon the endorser being a familiar and credible source. As a knighted, accomplished, and revered actor, whilst also physically attractive and charming, he appears to fit this model.

⁵ ‘Pictures and Players in the City’, *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 31 March 1917, p. 2.

This chapter draws on a range of archival sources to explore celebrity endorsement as a wider social function of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity. Typically, celebrity endorsement is considered with regards to the advertising of consumer products, and this forms the beginning of the chapter's discussion as the cigarette and soap industries (in the 1890s and 1900s) used Forbes-Robertson's brand to sell their products. It then moves to exploring how the cultural capital isolated in Forbes-Robertson's persona could endorse a new theatre (the Sherman Grand) in a new city (Calgary), and what his identity loaned to the building. The chapter then goes on to illustrate that Forbes-Robertson used his celebrity image or brand to endorse political and philanthropic causes. In the late twentieth and twenty-first centuries, celebrity involvement in political and philanthropic issues has been ubiquitous in the UK and USA. Contemporary celebrities are frequently seen endorsing candidates in political campaigns, publicly supporting social causes (nationally and internationally), and championing humanitarian charities. Some celebrities have gone beyond the entertainment world and actually entered politics by becoming elected representatives of political parties and UN missions. However, celebrity politics and activism is not a recent phenomenon. This chapter demonstrates that the practices of contemporary celebrity politics and activism were in place around the turn of the twentieth century. The emphasis of this chapter is that political and philanthropic causes are commodities to which a celebrity's meaning can be assigned. Forbes-Robertson capitalised on his celebrity profile for political campaigning, fundraising, morale boosting, and diplomacy work.

The chapter demonstrates the importance of the Forbes-Robertson brand in his promotion of women's suffrage. As a life-long supporter of the cause, he affiliated himself with several committees, for whom he became a spokesperson by virtue of his celebrity. His advocacy largely consisted of giving speeches and writing to newspapers, but feminist undertones in his most celebrated plays suggest that they were also vehicles for his political message. After the outbreak of the First World War, the women's suffrage movement focussed on assisting with war work. The public profile of actors and their ability to inspire and convince, meant that they were particularly adept at fundraising. The discussion concentrates on Forbes-Robertson's fundraising work for the British Women's Hospital and Scottish Women's Hospitals – both causes with affiliations to women's suffrage, which allowed him to further two aims simultaneously. His appearances in star matinees and the resurrection of *Passing* after his retirement proved lucrative means of raising funds. His association with Shakespeare – a national icon – evoked a sense of national pride when he gave performances to convalescing troops. Finally, the chapter moves on

to explore how Forbes-Robertson's admired public image in the US allowed him to act in a diplomatic capacity and assist in negotiating a positive relationship between the US and the UK.

3.2 Celebrity Endorsement of Commodities

Theatre celebrities, and actor-managers in particular, were, in King's terms, 'merchants of drama'.⁶ They used their name and their brand (along with other marketing points like the play, playwright, and the venue) to advertise a performance to theatregoers and used advertisements, posters, and newspaper announcements as instruments of meaning transfer. The posters in Figs 3.1 and 3.2 are illustrative of publicity materials that facilitated the name Forbes-Robertson to promote his performances. The St. James's Theatre poster advertises the whole 1908 season and only the name of the theatre is in a larger font than Forbes-Robertson's name. In the 1903 New Theatre poster, only the name of the theatre and the play being presented (which, in itself, is another commodity) are in a larger font than Forbes-Robertson's name. By the time of the production of these posters in the 1900s, Forbes-Robertson had an established celebrity and his name was a tool that brought the theatre and plays value through an association with a cultural quality.

⁶ p. 28.

St. James's

KING STREET
ST. JAMES'S S.W.

Theatre

Mr. FORBES-ROBERTSON'S SEASON

Sole Lessee and Manager :



Stage Manager
Business Manager

For Mr. FORBES-ROBERTSON

{ Mr. IAN ROBERTSON
{ Mr. SHAD FROST

GENERAL MANAGER (Mr. GEORGE ALEXANDER) MR. CHARLES T. H'T HELMSLEY

Fig 3.1: Poster for Forbes-Robertson's season at St. James's Theatre (Autumn 1908).⁷

⁷ M&M, BTC (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO).

In addition to selling drama, Forbes-Robertson's celebrity brand was used to sell services. For instance, a 1917 advertisement listed him as a patron for J. B. Crossley Elocution (public speaking and recitation tuition in Leeds), and a 1916 advertisement for Miss Rose Patry's School for elocution in Tunbridge Wells indicated that he was its president.⁹ A 1916 advertisement in *The Topeka State Journal* (Kansas) for Hurry Up Transfer Co. (Fig 3.3) boasts of having transported Forbes-Robertson's scenery in record time.¹⁰ In these instances his name offers a sense of prestige to the companies, legitimising their operations.

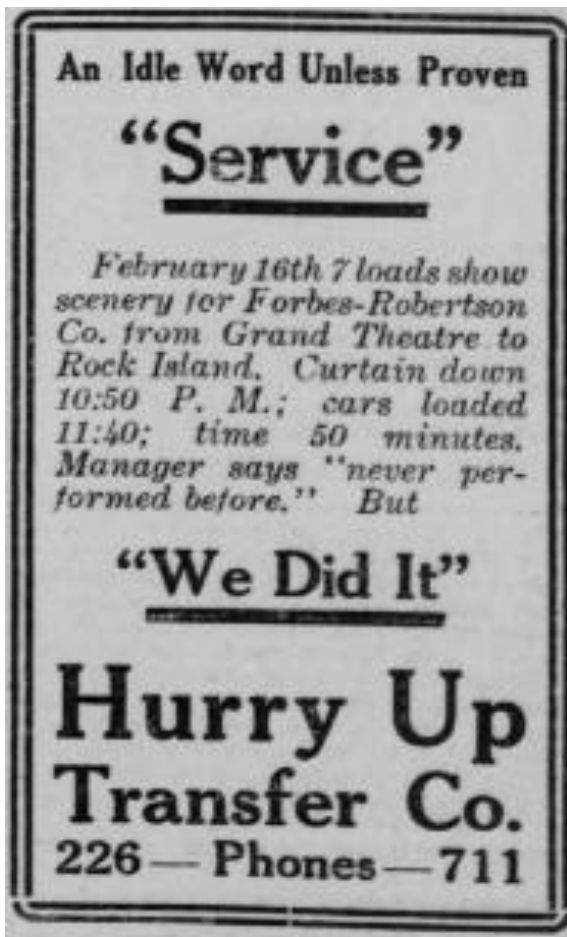


Fig 3.3: Advert in *Topeka State Journal* (1916).¹¹

Forbes-Robertson's brand was also used to endorse consumer commodities. Fig 3.4 is an advert for De Reszke Cigarettes in *The Bystander* magazine from 21 July 1920. The image

⁹ Ads., *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 16 June 1917, p. 1; 'Elocution, Etc.', *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 2 June 1916, p. 1.

¹⁰ 'Red Pep's Philosophy', *Topeka State Journal*, 22 February 1916, p. 8.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

depicts a fashionably dressed young man and woman punting on a lake on a summer day with people sauntering along the boardwalk in the background. The woman, cigarette in her mouth, directs the punt with a pole while the man lounges casually (indicated by his rolled-up sleeves) and extends his cigarette case towards a hand, appearing to come from a neighbouring punt, taking a cigarette from the case. The caption beneath the image reads, 'A cool cigarette – for a hot summer day' followed by a description of the 'pleasures' of smoking a De Reszke cigarette in mid-summer. An endorsement from Forbes-Robertson follows the caption: 'I consider the 'De Reszke' Cigarettes of high quality and pleasant to the taste'. Its slogan – "'De Reszke" Aristocrat of Cigarettes' – demonstrates that there was a class-based element to the marketing of the cigarettes. The advert communicates a message to the potential consumer that smoking these particular cigarettes is an activity of a genteel and leisured class. Forbes-Robertson's name has a transferable economic quality; the endorsement transfers the symbols and codes of his public persona – his beauty, aestheticism, eloquence, theatrical lineage, romance, and intelligence – to the cigarette brand, contributing to the product's stock of associated meanings that the advert promises to transfer to the consumer. By this point, as a wealthy retired and knighted individual, Forbes-Robertson's lifestyle was desirable and the implication of the endorsement is that, through purchasing and smoking De Rezske cigarettes, consumers can obtain an element of his individuality.

This Picture Free

You can obtain a copy of this picture, printed in colours on art paper, 15" x 10", by sending to address below a "De Reszke" box lid and 2d. stamps, mentioning picture No. 80.



A Man's Year: 6—Henley

Serenely conscious of admiring eyes,
Eveline fears no rival river belle . . .
No green-eyed monster haunts Love's Paradise,
When a "De Reszke" weaves its magic spell!

A cool cigarette — for a hot summer day

THE time to test a cigarette for coolness is on a mid-summer day. Then—more than at any other time an inferior cigarette "gives itself away"; smoking becomes tedious, a source of annoyance rather than pleasure.

But a summer day brings no discomfort to the smoker of "De Reszke" Tenors—in the heat the exquisite coolness of the "De Reszke" makes itself doubly apparent and appreciated. The cool, fresh flavour of the "De Reszke" is indeed a pleasure—a fragrant delight one can never tire of.

Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson writes:

"I consider the 'De Reszke' Cigarettes of high quality and pleasant to the taste."

Robert Radford, Esq., writes:

"I consider the 'De Reszke' Cigarettes easily the finest on the market. They have never harmed my throat in the least degree."

Herbert Oliver, Esq., writes:

"Your 'De Reszke' Cigarettes are delicious. They appear to have a tonic action on the throat rather than otherwise."

TENOR (Turkish)
10 for 1/3½ 25 for 3/2 50 for 6/1

AMERICAN (Virginia)
10 for 10d 25 for 2/1 50 for 4/2

Sold everywhere, or post free from

J. Millhoff & Co., Ltd. (Dept. 5), 86, Piccadilly, London, W.1.

BY APPOINTMENT
TO HER MAJESTY
THE KING OF SPAIN



"De Reszke" *The Aristocrat of* Cigarettes



Printed for the Proprietors, MESSRS. H. R. BAINES & COMPANY, LTD., by MESSRS. W. H. SMITH & SON, The Arden Press, Stamford Street, London, S.E. 8, and published weekly by MESSRS. H. R. BAINES & COMPANY, LTD., at Graphic Buildings, Tallis Street, London, E.C. 4 — July 21, 1920

Image © Illustration reproduced by permission of THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD.

Fig 3.4: De Reszke Advert (1920).¹²

¹² 'This Picture Free', *Bystander*, 21 July 1920, p.84.

The UK's Tobacco Advertising & Promotion Act 2002 prohibited virtually all forms of tobacco advertising from February 2003, but, a century earlier, newspaper advertisements for tobacco (predominantly cigarettes) were common as competition between companies was intense. In this competitive environment, celebrities featured heavily in promotional material for cigarette companies as the celebrity's individuality transferred to the products, rendering them distinctive from others. This section first offers an overview of the British cigarette industry and smoking culture in order to foreground the conditions for advertising in which celebrities became a prominent feature. Secondly, it deconstructs the meaning in the advertising and promotional materials to reveal the ideologies shared by the celebrity and the product.

Sir John Hawkins (1532-1595) first brought tobacco to Britain in 1565 and the popularity of taking tobacco in the form of snuff grew in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Matthew Hilton explains that, by the early nineteenth century, the cigar gained popularity amongst the bourgeoisie as a culture surrounding cigar smoking emerged.¹³ Smokers initially considered the cigarette effeminate and inferior to the cigar but, by the end of the century, smoking cigarettes became more commonplace.¹⁴ Despite the efforts of anti-tobacco campaigners, A. V. Seaton details that tobacco consumption increased from 1.7 lb per person in 1870, to 2.1 lb in 1900 – a 20 per cent increase.¹⁵ Aided by new technology, smoking cigarettes became the dominant form of tobacco use. For example, the increased output and reduced manpower following the W.D. & H.O. Wills cigarette company's (hereafter 'Wills') purchase of a Bonsack machine (a cigarette rolling machine that could manufacture 300 cigarettes per minute), meant that they could lower the price of cigarettes into a range affordable to lower-wage earners. As a result, Wills went from selling 6,500,000 cigarettes in Britain in 1884, to 312,992,790 in 1893.¹⁶ Hilton concludes that,

¹³ *Smoking in British Popular Culture, 1800-2000* (Manchester: UP, 2000), Chapters 1 and 2.

¹⁴ B. W. E. Alford explains the difficulty in pinpointing when the first cigarettes were produced commercially in the UK, as there is no evidence to support the previous assumption that Robert Gloag opened the first factory in 1856. Alford suggests the more probable story is that in the late 1840s some manufacturers produced cigarettes in small quantities. He identifies a man known as Theodoridi, a Greek who immigrated to the UK following the Crimean War (1854-6), as producing cigarettes from 1857, (B. W. E. Alford, *W.D. and H. O. Wills and the Development of the UK Tobacco Industry, 1786-1965* (London and New York: Routledge, 1973 repr. 2006), p. 123).

¹⁵ 'Cope's and the Promotion of Tobacco in Victorian England', *European Journal of Marketing*, 20(9), (1986), pp. 5 - 26

<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000004664>>, p. 24.

¹⁶ Hilton, Matthew. *Smoking in British Popular Culture, 1800-2000* (Manchester: UP, 2000)

by the end of the nineteenth century, cigarettes were smoked routinely as ‘a tool for getting through [life]’ while cigars were reserved for special occasions.¹⁷ Spearheaded by the rise of the cigarette, the British tobacco industry was thriving until the threat of an American invasion in the guise of James Buchanan Duke (‘Buck’ Duke, 1856-1925).

Duke was the son of Washington Duke (1820-1905), a tobacco farmer who returned home to North Carolina from a Union prisoner of war camp after the US Civil War (1861-1865) to find that some of his tobacco had remained undamaged during the war. He established a business selling his tobacco under the name *Pro Bono Publico*. Duke expanded this small family business into an empire by first focussing on the sale of cigarettes, the only aspect of the tobacco industry that was not dominated by any single company. He hired Edward Featherstone Small (1844-1924) as his sales campaign manager and, through increased advertising, improved sales. After taking over the business, in 1885 Buck Duke received two Bonsacks and his company went from rolling 2,000 cigarettes per day (by hand) to producing 250,000 cigarettes per day (with the machines). He proceeded to take over other cigarette companies and, in 1890, he formed a trust known as the American Tobacco Company (ATC).

In 1901 Duke turned to the conquest of Britain’s tobacco industry, reportedly setting aside £6 million (equivalent to £639,800,000 in 2018) to establish trade between the USA and UK.¹⁸ On 25 September 1901, Duke, along with William Harris, Joseph Hood (1863-1931), and three other (unnamed) subscribers, registered the British Tobacco Company in London having purchased Liverpool-based Ogden’s Cigarettes for £818,000 (equivalent to £85,190,000 in 2018).¹⁹ They then proceeded to incentivise retailers to push their products by offering free packets of cigarettes, and then reduced the prices of their US-imported cigarettes by 40%.²⁰ They introduced a coupon system, which, according to *The Northern Whig*, was ‘foreign to English methods of doing business. It remains to be seen how far the inducements offered by the “invaders” will tempt the retailers to study their profits at the expense of patriotism and of the

p. 83.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 52.

¹⁸ ‘Americans and the Tobacco Trade’, *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 September 1901, p. 9.

¹⁹ ‘Court News’, *Times*, 18 September 1901, p. 7; ‘Commercial Reports’, *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 28 September 1901, p. 12.

²⁰ ‘The Tobacco War’, *Oxfordshire Weekly News*, 30 October 1901, p. 2.

future'.²¹ As an immediate result of the Ogden's deal, *The Northern Whig* reported on 26 September that a 'powerful number of [British] manufacturers' were combining against the incoming US syndicate. On 22 October 1901, the *Yorkshire Evening Post* reported Duke's claim 'that he will capture the British trade within the next four years or lose a million sterling in the attempt. The challenge has been accepted by the foremost British manufacturers, who are mustering their forces as quickly as possible'.²² The response of 13 of the largest British cigarette companies was to merge – forming the Imperial Tobacco Company Limited (ITC) from 2 November 1901 (see Fig 3.5) – and to retaliate by offering their own bonuses to retailers.²³ This period in the industry became known as the Tobacco War as the two sides mustered for dominance in the British marketplace.

Business	Purchase price (£)
W. D. & H. O. Wills Ltd (Bristol)	6,992,221
Lambert & Butler Ltd (London)	754,306
Stephen Mitchell & Son (Glasgow)	701,000
John Player & Sons Ltd (Nottingham)	601,456
F. & J. Smith (Glasgow)	525,803
Hignett, Brothers & Co. Ltd (Liverpool)	477,038
Franklyn, Brothers & Co. (Bristol)	473,555
William Clarke & Son Ltd (Liverpool)	403,582
Edwards, Ringer & Bigg Ltd (Bristol)	372,603
The Richmond Cavendish Co. Ltd (Liverpool)	319,805
Adkin & Sons (London)	146,497
D. & J. Macdonald (Glasgow)	134,973
Hignett's Tobacco Company (London)	54,183
Total	11,957,022

Fig 3.5: The 13 businesses that formed the ITC in 1901 and their purchase prices.²⁴

On 2 December, the ITC launched an offensive when it published a full-page advert for their cigarettes in about one hundred principal newspapers across the country appealing to the loyalty and patriotism of the British public (see Figs 3.6 and 3.7). *The Dundee Evening Post* surmised that the advertising campaign must have broken records for the cost of the publicity, which they estimated at £7,000 (equivalent to £729,000 in 2018).²⁵ The fierce competition

²¹ 'The Tobacco War', *Northern Whig*, 31 October 1901, p. 8.

²² 'The America Invasion', *Northern Whig*, 26 September 1901, p. 8; 'The Tobacco Trade War', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 22 October 1901, p. 5.

²³ 'The Imperial Tobacco Company', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 14 December 1901, p. 8.

²⁴ Hilton, (2000), p. 87.

²⁵ 'Tobacco War', *Dundee Evening Post*, 3 December 1901, p. 1.

continued until the ATC and ITC signed a truce in September 1902. Duke returned Ogden's to the ITC in return for stock, and the ATC and ITC amalgamated to form the British-American Tobacco Company Limited, headed by Duke and Wills.²⁶

THE WESTERN MORNING NEWS, MONDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1901

TO THE BRITISH PUBLIC.

Americans, whose markets are closed by prohibitive tariffs against British goods, have declared their intention of monopolising the Tobacco Trade of this Country

It is for the British Public to decide whether British Labour, Capital, and Trade are to be subordinate to the American System of Trust Monopoly and all that is implied therein.

THE IMPERIAL TOBACCO CO.

(Of Great Britain and Ireland), Limited.

will be an Amalgamation of British Manufacturers who have closed their ranks with a determination to hold the British Trade for British People. Its aim is to provide the vast Smoking Public with

CIGARETTES and TOBACCOS,

unexcelled in quality, and made solely by means of

BRITISH LABOUR and CAPITAL.

The Various Brands of the Undersigned Manufacturers have a Reputation for Excellence the World over.

THE NAMES OF THE MANUFACTURERS FORMING THE IMPERIAL TOBACCO CO. ARE A GUARANTEE THAT THE PRODUCTS OF THEIR FACTORIES ARE

THE BEST

<p style="margin: 0;">W. D. and H. O. Wills, Limited Edwards, Rieger, and Biggs, Limited Franklyn, Davsey, and Co.</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">Lambert and Butler, Limited Hignett's Tobacco Co., Limited Adkin and Sons</p>	<p style="margin: 0;">John Player and Sons, Limited Hignett Brothers and Co., Limited William Clarke and Son, Limited Richmond Cusvendiak Co., Limited Stephen Mitchell and Son F. and J. Smith D. and J. Macdonald</p>
} Bristol.	} London.	} Nottingham. } Liverpool. } Glasgow.

THAT A COMBINATION OF SKILL, JUDGMENT, AND EXPERIENCE CAN PRODUCE

Image © THE BRITISH LIBRARY BOARD. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Fig 3.6: Advert for the ITC (1901).²⁷

²⁶ 'The Tobacco Trade', *The Times*, 29 September 1902, p. 4. See also: D.O Whitten and B. E. Whitten, *The Birth of Big Business in the United States, 1860-1914: Commercial, Extractive and Industrial Enterprise* (Connecticut: Praeger, 2006), p. 86-92; Martin Murray, *The Story of Cigarette Cards* (London: Murray Cards, 1987), p. 27.

²⁷ 'To The British Public', *Western Morning News*, 2 December 1901, p. 7.

To the
British Public

Americans, whose markets are closed by prohibitive tariffs against British goods, have declared their intention of monopolising the Tobacco Trade of this Country.

It is for the **British Public** to decide *whether* **BRITISH LABOUR, CAPITAL, and TRADE** are to be subordinate to the *American System* of **TRUST MONOPOLY** and all that is implied therein.

The Imperial Tobacco Co.
(of Great Britain and Ireland) Limited.
About to be incorporated under the Companies Act, 1892 to 1900.

will be an *amalgamation* of British Manufacturers who have closed their ranks with the determination to hold the **BRITISH TRADE** for **BRITISH PEOPLE**. Its aim is to provide the vast Smoking Public with **CIGARETTES AND TOBACCOS**, unexcelled in quality and made solely by means of **British Labour and Capital.**

THE VARIOUS BRANDS OF THE UNDERSIGNED MANUFACTURERS HAVE A REPUTATION FOR EXCELLENCE THE WORLD OVER.

The names of the Manufacturers forming The **IMPERIAL TOBACCO CO.** are a guarantee that the products of their factories are

The Best that a combination of **SKILL, JUDGMENT, AND EXPERIENCE** can produce.

<p><i>W. D. & H. O. Wills, Ltd.</i></p> <p><i>Edwards, Ringer & Bigg, Ltd.</i> Bristol</p> <p><i>Franklyn, Davey & Co.</i></p> <p><i>Lambert & Butler, Ltd.</i></p> <p><i>Hignett's Tobacco Co., Ltd.</i> London</p> <p><i>Halkin & Sons</i></p>	<p><i>John Player & Sons, Ltd.</i> . . . Nottingham</p> <p><i>Hignett Bros. & Co., Ltd.</i></p> <p><i>William Clarke & Son, Ltd.</i> Liverpool</p> <p><i>Richmond Cavendish Co., Ltd.</i></p> <p><i>Stephen Mitchell & Son</i></p> <p><i>F. & J. Smith</i> Glasgow</p> <p><i>D. & J. Macdonald</i></p>
----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

I.T.C.O.

Fig 3.7: Advert for the ITC (1901).²⁸

With this climate of increased competition in Britain came heavy advertising along American advertising models. In addition to competing with the ATC, the British companies also employed fierce advertising methods in order to overcome anti-smoking campaigns and, with the

²⁸ 'To The British Public', *Sportsman*, 2 December 1901, p. 2.

Bonsack machines' ability to produce huge quantities of cigarettes, they also had to create consumer demand for their commodity. Seaton describes how Cope's (second to only Wills Cigarettes in the 1890s) used publicity and combative promotion to counteract the campaigners, and actively fought to legitimise the practice of smoking.²⁹ According to Seaton, '[b]ehind the beautifully produced posters [...] can be discerned a general intention to convert smoking into a signifier of the good, the literary, the chic, the artistic, the bohemian, the manly, the modern...the aristocratic...the natural...'.³⁰ Advertising was a means for the tobacco manufacturers to generate a relationship with their consumer by appealing to, amongst other things, their modernity. Ironically, while the modern man alluded to in advertising material was a liberal man and an individual,³¹ mass consumerism and big business could no longer treat their customers as individuals. Previously, consumers of tobacco received a personal service from a tobacconist who blended tobacco to suit personal preferences. With mass manufacturing, businesses had to cater to buying trends, which treated the purchasers as consumer types rather than as individuals. Advertising communicated ideas of individuality in mass-produced products to a collection of individuals. Advertising materials homogenised consumers through the use of celebrities who, with their expansive public, could appeal to the greatest number of potential consumers.

One of the gimmicks that the cigarette industry adopted to entice and maintain a loyal customer base was the cigarette card. The packets containing the cigarettes were flimsy, so companies introduced a board, known as a 'stiffener', to maintain the shape of the box. Martin Murray describes one theory associated with the printing of pictures on the cigarette cards:

The legend relates that James Buchanan Duke once saw a smoker throw his unwanted stiffener on to the sidewalk, and had the inspiration that if he printed an attractive picture, possibly of the female form, on his stiffener, not only would they be retained as a permanent reminder of his name and products, but perhaps the smoker would be persuaded to stay with that brand and even smoke more in an effort to obtain more sensual images.³²

²⁹ p. 5.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

³¹ Hilton has found that there were women smokers towards the end of the nineteenth century but they were less visible than men often choosing to smoke in private (secret) as it was not considered respectable. During the War, when women entered the workplace to replace the enlisted men, they enjoyed a level of emancipation as a consequence of earning a wage and many more women took up smoking during this period as a symbol of this liberation. By the 1920s, women smokers were more socially acceptable, (See Hilton, (2000), Chapter 6 'Consuming the unrespectable: smoking and femininity', pp. 138-161).

³² *Ibid.*, p. 21.

The earliest cigarette cards appeared in America in 1879 and within a decade most major US tobacco companies had produced at least one series of cards. In the UK, tobacco companies eventually caught up with the new US trend by the end of the century when some of the larger firms began producing cards. Cigarette cards were unlike other marketing methods (advertisements, posters, and point of sale displays) in that they were collected by individuals and so had a value attached to them and became, therefore, a commodity in their own right. The early cigarette cards mainly pictured beautiful actresses, but in the early twentieth century the range of topics became more diverse. In 1902, Wills's Cigarettes card series included Coronations, Football, Kings and Queens, Locomotives & Rolling Stock, 'Our Gallant Grenadiers', Transvaal, and Vanity Fair magazine covers. During the Boer War it became commonplace to record topical events on cards and this practice continued through the First World War campaigns.³³ Famous people were also a common theme, including Kings and Queens, military heroes, politicians, historical figures, writers, inventors, sports people, and, naturally, actors. It was in this capacity that Forbes-Robertson's picture came to be featured on cigarette cards.

Figs 3.8 to 3.10 below are cigarette cards featuring Forbes-Robertson (either as a celebrity persona or in various characters). The first belongs to a series from 1902 by Wills, who released a series of cards featuring caricatures from past issues of *Vanity Fair* magazine. 'Vanity Fair, 1st Series No 13' was a reproduction of Ward's chromolithograph of 'Forbie' from 2 May 1895 discussed in the previous chapter. On the reverse of the card there is a snippet from the original article that reads: 'Mr. Johnston Forbes-Robertson. Painstaking, full of artistic conception, handsome, and an admirable elocutionist, he has steadily made his way to the very front of his profession'. It is noteworthy that the caption on the cigarette card itself does not mention that Forbes-Robertson is an actor; it must have been presumed that everyone would know to which 'profession' it is referring. In the caricature he is dressed in a grey suit composed of morning coat, double-breasted waistcoat, pinstripe trousers, and a wing collar with necktie. He is depicted in a pose, rather than a natural stance, facing to his right so his face is in side-profile, but his left leg is delicately opened up from his right so that he is at a slight angle, but still standing with erect posture. His visible hand rests on the lower back pulling back his coat, which allows the waistcoat and his body to be more visible. The body language suggests confidence and openness, and the intention appears to be to display the physique of the actor but at the same time the

³³ Murray, p. 30.

arrangement of this figure in such a pose with fashionable clothing suggests that he is the object of an onlooker's gaze. Ward's caricature depicts a modern physical form of masculinity based on modernity, fashion, and confidence.



Fig 3.8: Wills's Cigarettes Card, 'Forbie', 'Vanity Fair, 1st Series No 13' (reproduced 1902).³⁴

Ogden's also used Forbes-Robertson's photograph for their Guinea Gold Cigarettes cards (see Figs 3.9 and 3.10). Howard Cox explains that, unlike Wills whose expenditure on advertising equated to between 1% and 2%, Ogden's was 'an unusually aggressive competitor in the British market for manufactured cigarettes, devoting 25 per cent of its net profits to advertising'.³⁵ An Ogden's advert (Fig 3.11) from the *Manchester Evening News* on 3 September 1901 (the month the ATC purchased Ogden's) details their latest cards series: 'THE MOST

³⁴ Private collection.

³⁵ *The Global Cigarette: Origins and Evolution of British American Tobacco 1880-1945* (Oxford: UP, 2000), p. 70.

EXTRAORDINARY AND UNIQUE COLLECTION' of 200 real photographs, of which Forbes-Robertson is number 163 (Fig 3.9). Collectors could purchase an album in which to hold the photographs and Ogden's would purchase the first 1,000 completed albums for one guinea (equivalent to £109.30 in 2018) to donate to hospitals and charitable institutions.³⁶ Murray describes that marketing campaigns that made use of real photographs were successful at increasing their brand's popularity.³⁷ Forbes-Robertson's photograph depicts the celebrity persona (rather than a character) accompanied by the caption: 'Acknowledged to give one of the finest renderings of Hamlet.' Ogden's featured a Forbes-Robertson photograph on another card in the character role of Dick Helder in *The Light That Failed* as part of the 'New Series 1' (see Fig 3.10). They released the card in 1902, although the premier production of *The Light That Failed* was not until 7 February 1903 (at the Lyric Theatre), which suggests that Ogden's used images already in nation-wide media to accompany the existing publicity in the run up to the opening of the play.

³⁶ 'The Manufacturers of Ogden's "Guinea Gold" Cigarettes', *Manchester Evening News*, 3 September 1901, p. 5.

³⁷ Murray, p. 27.

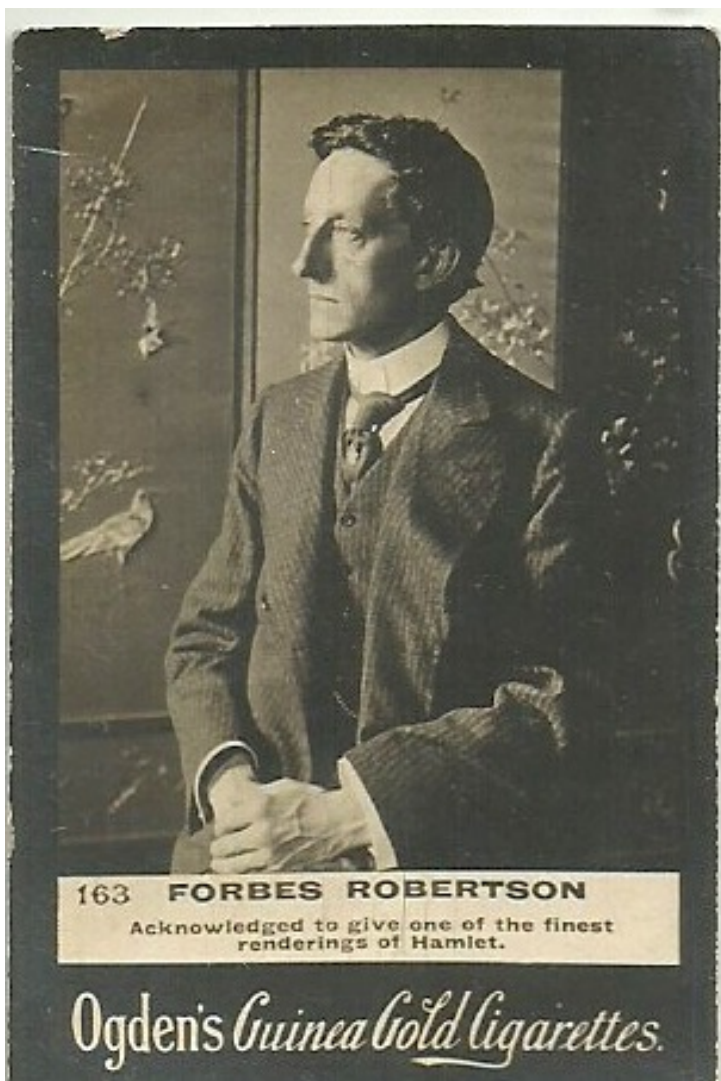


Fig 3.9: Ogden's Guinea Gold Cigarette Card, 'Forbes Robertson' (1901).³⁸

³⁸ Private collection.



Figure 3.10: Ogden's Guinea Gold Cigarette Card, 'Forbes Robertson' (1902).³⁹

³⁹ Private collection.

Present is 'Sir J. Forbes-Robertson as "Mark Embury" in "Mice and Men."' (Fig 3.13, the tables in Figs 3.14 and 3.15 list the other titles in both series). The back of the 1916 card has the description:

Mr J. Forbes-Robertson, surely one of the greatest exponents of "Hamlet" of all time, is not only one of the most distinguished actors of his period, but an accomplished painter. Becoming an actor when 21, he was a pupil of Samuel Phelps, and was associated with the Bancrofts and John Hare before he entered successfully upon management on his own account in 1896. A superb elocutionist, with a dignified stage presence, and withal a most gracious and kindly personality, no actor of our day ever had a more admiring public; and it was matter for keen regret when he decided to retire from the stage, commencing his farewell tour at Drury Lane in 1913.

In contrast to Ogden's cards, the pictures on the Player's cards are sketches rather than photographs. Ogden's and Player's use Forbes-Robertson's celebrity in different ways in these series. Player's, punning on their brand name, allude to a celebrity based on stage distinction and memorialise the performer in the guise of staged fictional roles. The Player's pictures are full-body sketches in costume, while Ogden's use of photographs permits a closer perspective of Forbes-Robertson's face (even though Fig 3.10 features Forbes-Robertson in role as Dick Heldar, there is nothing on the card that signifies the stage role he was enacting and maintains the focus on his facial features).



Fig 3.12: Player's Cigarette Card, 'Forbes Robertson in "For the Crown."' (1898).⁴²

⁴² Player's Cigarettes 'Actors and Actresses' series, New York Public Library, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-7a48-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99/book?parent=f5baa9d0-c52b-012f-5d95-58d385a7bc34#page/1/mode/1up>, [accessed 10 April 1916]



Fig 3.13: 7. Player's Cigarettes, 'Sir J. Forbes-Robertson as "Mark Embury" in "Mice and Men."' from "Actors and Actresses" series (1916).⁴³

⁴³ Private collection.

Series No.	Card
1	George Alexander as 'Orlando'
2	Dorothea Baird as 'Trilby'
3	Wilson Barrett as 'Marcus Superbus'
4	Mrs. Patrick Campbell in 'For the Crown'
5	Hayden Coffin in 'The Geisha'
6	Louise Freear in 'Oh Susannah'
7	Winifred Emery in 'Under the Red Robe'
8	Ethel Haydon in 'The Circus Girl'
9	Irving as 'Ichamo'
10	Irving as 'Mephistopheles'
11	Maud Jeffreys as 'Mercia'
12	Letty Lind as 'Molly Seamore'
13	Julia Neilson as 'Rosalind'
14	Ada Rehan as 'Viola'
15	Forbes Robertson in 'For the Crown'
16	Arthur Roberts as 'Dandy Dan'
17	Nellie Stewart in 'The Scarlett Fever'
18	William Terris as 'Don Pedro'
19	Ellen Terry in 'Faust'
20	Berbohm Tree in 'The Seats of the Mighty'
21	Kate Vaughan as 'Lady Teazle'
22	Herbert Waring in 'Under the Red Robe'
23	Charles Wyndham as 'David Garrick'
24	Sarah Bernhardt in 'La Tosca'
25	May Yohé in 'Little Christopher Columbus'

Fig 3.14: The full set of the 1898 Player's Cigarette series.

Series No.	Card
1	Sir Henry Irving as 'Mephistopheles' in 'Faust'
2	Sir Squire Bancroft as 'Captain Hawtree' in 'Caste'
3	Mr. J. L. Toole in 'Walter, London'
4	Sir George Alexander as 'Rupert of Hentzau' in 'The Prisoner of Zenda'
5	Lady Bancroft as 'Peg Woffington' in 'Masks and Faces'
6	Sir Herbert Tree as 'Svengali' in 'Trilby'
7	Sir J. Forbes-Robertson as 'Mark Embury' in 'Mice and Men'
8	Sir Charles Wyndham as 'David Garrick'
9	Cyril Maude as 'Captain Barley' in 'Beauty and the Barge'
10	Miss Gertrude Elliott as 'Peggy' in 'Mice and Men'
11	W.S. Penley as 'Rev. Robert Spalding' in 'The Private Secretary'
12	Sir John Hare as 'Benjamin Goldfinch' in 'A Pair of Spectacles'
13	Miss Winifred Emery as 'Miss Elizabeth Linley' in 'Dick Sheridan'
14	Miss Julia Neilson as 'Nell Gwynne' in 'Sweet Nell of Old Drury'
15	Miss Gladys Cooper as 'Anne' in 'My Lady's Dress'
16	Rutland Barrington as 'Pooh-Bah' in 'The Mikado'
17	Henry Ainley as 'Ham Carve' in 'The Great Adventure'
18	Dennis Eadie in 'Disraeli'
19	Miss Ellen Terry as 'Marguerite' in 'Faust'
20	Gerald du Maurier in 'Raffles'
21	Coquelin in 'Cyrano de Bergerac'
22	Martin Harvey as 'Sidney Carton' in 'The Only Way'
23	Fred Terry as 'Charles II' in 'Sweet Nell of Old Drury'
24	Lewis Waller in 'Monsieur Beaucaire'
25	Mrs. Kendal as 'Mistress Ford' in 'The Merry Wives of Windsor'

Fig 3.15: The full set of the 1916 Player's Cigarette series.

As leaders of British tobacco advertising, Ogden's Cigarettes situates Forbes-Robertson as an iconic figurehead of modernity and idealised masculinity. Fig 3.16 is a photograph of Forbes-Robertson in the early 1900s poised with a cigarette. While the purpose of the photograph is not indicated, it aids an exploration of the meaning that tobacco companies could gain from Forbes-Robertson's celebrity. As the previous chapters have demonstrated, by the 1900s Forbes-Robertson's celebrity profile was summarisable as a physically attractive and intelligent artist of the stage and palette, with the confluence of social distinction and bohemian associations, and a symbol of romance. This aspirational persona transferred to the cigarette – mounted in a cigarette holder delicately poised in his fingers – rendering it fashionable. As a fashionable, handsome, modern, British gentleman with the high degree of individualism associated with artists, he evoked the ideologies that the cigarette industry wished to promote.



Fig 3.16: Forbes-Robertson posing with a cigarette (circa 1903).⁴⁴

The exchange value of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity was appropriated by at least one other commodity in this period: soap. The same *Vanity Fair* image printed on Wills's Cigarettes card was also used on a postcard alongside a slogan advertising Oowana Soap (Fig 3.17). Like cigarettes, soap sales soared towards the end of nineteenth century; in 1801 the domestic use of soap (in England) was 3.6lbs per person, increasing to 8lbs in 1861, and doubling again by 1891.⁴⁵ According to Anne McClintock, by the 1890s, Victorians consumed 260,000 tons of soap

⁴⁴ The photography studio 'Gilbert and Bacon' operated in Philadelphia from 1870-1920 and as far as the evidence shows Forbes-Robertson's first trip to Philadelphia was in Autumn 1903 where he opened his American tour of *Hamlet* and *The Light That Failed*, (Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library Digital Collections, <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47de-d81e-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99> [accessed 10 April 1916]).

⁴⁵ A Fleck, 'Technology and Its Consequences', in *A History of Technology, Vol. 5: The Late 19th Century* (London: Oxford UP, 1958).

annually.⁴⁶ The erasure of soap tax in 1853 aided an increase in sales and, coupled with heavy advertising, the industry gained economic force. In 1870, there were hundreds of small soap companies, but competition from abroad resulted in mergers and acquisitions of smaller companies and more aggressive advertising. Just as tobacconists traditionally blended tobacco for an individual, grocers sold soap by the weight of a slice according to the needs of the consumer. The Trade Marks Registration Act 1875 established a system for the registration of trademarks at the UK Patent Office. According to the Act, a trademark was defined as:

- A name of an individual or firm printed, impressed, or woven in some particular and distinctive manner; or
- A written signature or copy of a written signature of an individual or firm; or
- A distinctive device, mark, heading, label, or ticket[.]⁴⁷

Following the introduction of the Act on 1 January 1876, manufacturers became conscious of trade marking and brand identities.

⁴⁶ ‘Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising’, in *Travellers' Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement*, ed. by George Robertson, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 131-154, p. 136.

⁴⁷ Edward Morton Daniel. *The Trade Marks Registration Act, [...]*, (London: Stevens & Haynes, 1876), in <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/010476075>.



Fig 3.17: Stewart & Woolf postcard, *Vanity Fair* Series 102 with Oowana Soap advertisement featuring Forbes Robertson (circa 1900s).⁴⁸

William Lever (to become The Viscount Leverhulme, 1851-1925), the industrialist and politician, registered a trademark for the first individually wrapped soap bar in 1884 – ‘Sunlight Soaps’. An advert for Sunlight Soaps in 1884 (Fig 3.18) forges a connection between the brand and the consumer when it quotes an ‘Eminent Divine’ as saying,

The advancement of the world and the spread of civilisation and Christianity depends on the interchange of thought among people and their willingness to learn; AND THE MAN OR WOMAN WHO OPPOSES THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW IMPROVEMENTS, THE TRIAL OF NEW WAYS, AND THE USE OF NEW THINGS should be condemned as not being good and useful members of society.

The advert continues to instruct, ‘AND NOW, IF NOT SET TO OLD WAYS, BE SURE TO TRY THE SUNLIGHT SOAPS’.⁴⁹ The meaning contained in this message transferred to the soap and then to the consumer – in this instance, the civilising, Christian, and forward-thinking connotations of the soap attached to the user. Lever’s competitors began to manufacture more individual soap bars and this mass production required increased brand identity.

⁴⁸ Add Ms 62706, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers, Vol. XII, BL.

⁴⁹ ‘Sunlight Soaps’, *Wigan Observer*, 23 July 1884, p. 8.

USE THEM IN HOT WATER.
 USE THEM IN COLD WATER.
 USE THEM IN BOILING THE CLOTHES.
 USE THEM WITHOUT BOILING THE
 CLOTHES.
 USE THEM AS TAUGHT BY ACTUAL
 PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE.
 USE THEM IN ANY METHOD, OLD OR
 NEW.

IN FACT, USE THEM in your own peculiar
 manner, and the result will be--Clean
 and sweet linen, wholesome in its
 use, giving a healthy action to the
 skin, and in every way conducive to
 health and comfort.

ALL THIS REFERS
 TO THE

SUNLIGHT SOAPS.

DEALERS AND CONSUMERS
 WHO HAVE GIVEN THE

SUNLIGHT SOAPS
 a fair trial, pronounce them superior to any Soaps
 ever offered.

AN EMINENT DIVINE says:—

“The advancement of the world and
 the spread of civilisation and Chris-
 tianity depends on interchange of
 thought among people and their wil-
 lingness to learn; AND THE MAN OR
 WOMAN WHO OPPOSES THE INTRO-
 DUCION OF NEW IMPROVEMENTS, THE
 TRIAL OF NEW WAYS, AND THE USE OF
 NEW THINGS should be condemned as
 not being good and useful members
 of society.”

AND NOW, IF NOT SET TO OLD WAYS,
 BE SURE TO TRY THE
SUNLIGHT SOAPS.

TRY THEM FOR THE TOILET.
 TRY THEM FOR THE BATH-ROOM.
 TRY THEM FOR SHAVING.
 TRY THEM FOR WASHING DISHES.
 TRY THEM FOR HOUSE CLEANING.
 TRY THEM FOR SCRUBBING.
 AND BE CERTAIN TO
 TRY THEM FOR WASHING CLOTHES.

THE SUNLIGHT SOAPS,
 MANUFACTURED EXPRESSLY FOR
LEVER & CO.,
 BOLTON AND WIGAN.

SOLD RETAIL BY ALL GROCERS.

Fig 3.18: Advert for Sunlight Soaps (1884).⁵⁰

⁵⁰ *Wigan Observer*, 23 July 1884, p. 8.

When Oowana Soap first appeared on the market in 1901, its marketing in newspapers evoked a sense of exoticism, prestige, and masculinity around the product. According to *The Bath Chronicle*, the name ‘Oowana’ reflected the soap’s exotic ingredients – a blend of certain Eastern plants with cleansing properties.⁵¹ An advertisement in *London Mainly About People* (November 1902) states, ‘THE BEAUTIFUL OOWANA SOAP. As Supplied to H.M.S. “OPHIR” for the ROYAL TOUR’, while another (in 1908) boasts that the ‘guaranteed British made’ Oowana Soap was ‘Supplied by special desire | H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on | Royal Indian Tour’ and includes endorsements from Lady Mowbray & Stourton, Colonel B. M. Alderson, and the Marquis of Normandy (Fig 3.19).⁵² Stewart & Woolf (formed in 1900) printed the Forbes-Robertson/Oowana Soap postcard as part of the *Vanity Fair* ‘Men of the Day’ series, which suggests that Oowana intended to target their toiletries to fashionable men and chose marketing material to appeal to the masculinity of the potential consumers.⁵³

Oowana Soap. Supplied by special desire
H.R.H. the Prince of Wales on
Royal Indian Tour.

A Vegetable Toilet Soap, containing special constituents of particular anti-
septic and cleansing properties. It is exquisitely perfumed and softens the
hardest water. Unequaled for delicate skins.

Excellent for the teeth and hair. Four Gold Medals—London and Paris.

The Lancet says—“It is free from alkaline excess and irritants, and is bland and
soothing to the skin.”

The Hospital says—“We have made a trial of this soap, and find it fulfils the condi-
tions claimed for it, is deliciously scented, and is free from all ingredients likely to
prove in the least deleterious to the most delicate skins.”

Lady Mowbray & Stourton writes—“Oowana surpasses any other soap I have used.”

Colonel B. M. Alderson, of Ipswich, writes—“I swear by that Oowana soap, n^o ev
was there such shaving soap.”

The Oowana Shaving Soaps are ‘guaranteed
to give entire satisfaction, and produce a thick, soft, delightful lather that NEVER
dries on the face, while it is antiseptic and healing, and soothing to the most tender
skin. The Marquis of Ormondy writes:—“I swear by that Oowana Soap—Never
was there such Shaving Soap.” The 1/6 Toilet Tabs are put up 3 Tabs in a Cream
and Gold Box, and will be sent to any address for 3/3 in Postal Notes. The Shaving
Soaps will be posted to any address, no charge for postage. Oowana Toilet and
Shaving Soaps are guaranteed British made, and free from all Animal Matters
tinned meat (andals), and can be used for the most delicate skin. For the Toilet
has no equal. Oowana is not an expensive soap, it lasts 3 times as long as any other.

PRICES—Toilet Soap, 6d., 9d. and 1/- per tablet, put up 3 tabs in handsome fancy
boxes. Shaving Soap sold in neat decorated tins, 6d. and 1/- each, by all best-class
chemists and fancy dealers in Victoria.

Fig 3.19: Oowana Soap Advert (1908).⁵⁴

⁵¹ ‘The Oowana Soap Company, Limited’, *Bath Chronicle*, 23 May 1901, p. 5.

⁵² ‘Amusements’, *London Mainly About People*, 8 November 1902, p. 30; ‘Oowana Soap’, *The Reporter*, (Australia), 13 November 1908, p. 6.

⁵³ Stephen Holder, ‘The Stewart & Woolf Silhouettes’, in *Picture Postcard Monthly*, December 2010, p. 44.

⁵⁴ *The Reporter* (Australia), 13 November 1908, p. 6.

Forbes-Robertson's image alongside the brand label on the Oowana Soap postcard, adds to the fetishism of the commodity by contributing to the autonomy of the soap brand's identity, disconnecting the product from the human labour that manufactured it. On the postcard, there is no image of soap or action to imply the use of soap. The soap commodity is completely absent, leaving only the brand name and the image of the caricatured Forbes-Robertson, which suggests that the image of a celebrity, even if unaffiliated with the commodity, had more value in marketing than the commodity itself. John McDonough and Karen Egolf explain that this was an aspect of the new era of marketing's soft-sell approach, which 'focused on establishing the brand name and the reputability of the manufacturer with favorable and memorable associations'.⁵⁵ In this instance, the soap product is being associated with Forbes-Robertson and the character traits contained within that identity.

The postcard in Fig 3.17 is archived in a scrapbook probably assembled by Ida (Forbes-Robertson's sister) and a single sentence noted on the front of the postcard, written in Forbes-Robertson's handwriting, reads only, 'A nice pass things have come to!' As private correspondence between brother and sister this suggests that Forbes-Robertson disapproved of his identity being used in this fashion. It may suggest that he had no awareness that he would be 'endorsing' Oowana Soap or his comment might be a suggestion that he found the process of featuring in advertising humiliating. It also suggests that celebrities had little control over the use of his/her brand. In this instance, it is probable that Forbes-Robertson gave permission for Ward's cartoon to feature in *Vanity Fair*, but it is possible that the magazine sold on the rights to re-print their magazine covers on postcards to the soap company without requiring the permission of the original celebrities. This indicates the external factors involved in the creation and function of celebrity.

3.3 Celebrity Endorsement of Buildings, Places, and Events

In his 2004 discussion of the conditions in which a theatre event takes place, Ric Knowles argues that the meaning contained within a theatre production cannot be isolated from the performance environment. While Knowles considers the negotiations of contemporary theatre productions with their local audiences in particular settings, his materialist approach to establishing meaning

⁵⁵ *The Advertising Age Encyclopedia of Advertising* (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2002), p. 755.

is equally applicable to historical theatre events and assists in decoding the celebrity value in a media event. The context of a theatre performance's production and reception contributes to the theatre performance as an event and, of particular importance to this section, this includes the physical space and geographical location of the event. Equally important when analysing a theatre event is what Knowles refers to as the 'public discourse' or publicity materials, reviews, and discussions of the play.⁵⁶ The way that a celebrity is used or presented in such publicity materials affects the impact of the play upon its public.

As culturally determined products of political and social conditions, celebrity appearances at entertainment venues or events generate public interest, creating media events. They shape the public's reception of the space by creating a range of expectations for the venue. In this sense, just as celebrities endorse commodities (like soap and cigarettes), so they have the capacity to endorse public spaces. The presence of Forbes-Robertson – a bearer of cultural signs – at an event, particularly as the headliner, created political meaning. All of Forbes-Robertson's performances were, in some capacity, media events, but some events had specific ideological objectives, such as at the openings of new theatres where ideological coding had not been ascribed. This section of the chapter explores the meaning transfer from Forbes-Robertson's celebrity to a new entertainment venue – the Sherman Grand in Calgary, Canada, on 5 February 1912. On the subject of Calgary's growth, Susan Bennett (2017) suggests 'that signature architecture in the urban setting is consistently definitional not so much for what a city (Calgary) is, but for what it might become'.⁵⁷ The building of the Sherman Grand indicated the importance of the cultural arts to Calgary's ambitions to become a principal city. Bennett refers to Forbes-Robertson's presence at the inaugural performance, but this section illustrates the political and ideological design behind Forbes-Robertson's appearance there and the meaning of his endorsement of the space.

In January 1912, Forbes-Robertson was touring *Passing* around North America en route to Canada and, on 22 January, the *Calgary Daily Herald* announced that Forbes-Robertson's play would be adding a stop to inaugurate the town's new theatre, the Sherman Grand, on 5 February.

⁵⁶ *Reading the Material Theatre* (Cambridge: UP, 2004), p. 92.

⁵⁷ 'Calgary's Cultural Topography: The Performance of a City,' in *Performance Studies in Canada* ed. by Laura Levin and Marlis Schweitzer (Canada: McGill-Queen's UP, 2017), pp. 43-66, p. 44.

The article included a photograph of Forbes-Robertson as the Stranger (see Fig 3.20) and emphasised the eminence of the actor and grandeur of the location. It claimed that '[w]ithout a doubt the opening night of Calgary's new theatre will be the event of the theatrical season in the city, and it will inaugurate a period of great improvement in the quality of touring companies'.⁵⁸ In addition to the performance of *Passing*, Forbes-Robertson read an opening speech before the curtain went up, and, after the performance, there was an on-stage public reception followed by a banquet. Having cost \$500,000 CAD (equivalent to £6,782,016 in 2018) to build, the press hailed the Sherman Grand as one of the best theatres in the West.⁵⁹ It boasted seating capacity for 1,504 patrons, cutting-edge fireproofing, 'mellow' lighting, heating and ventilating systems, large and comfortable seating, an elaborate entrance, an enormous stage, and restrooms.⁶⁰ In addition to these practical comforts, the exterior was ornately decorated with carvings, and paintings hung around the interior. It belonged to a seven-storey office complex owned by Senator James Lougheed (1854-1925), but he leased the theatre to American-born impresario Bill Sherman after whom the building was named. 'Bill Sherman thought big,' explains Donald B. Smith in his assessment of the occasion:

Only six weeks before the Sherman Grand opened he announced that he planned to have the celebrated dancer Anna Pavlova [1881-1931] inaugurate it. Whether or not he actually invited the famed Russian ballerina made little difference, for the 'announcement' fed the buzz about his theatre's opening.⁶¹

Sherman appears to have determined to create a media event to mark the opening and a celebrity novelty was central to this plan. The association of the theatre with an acknowledged great stage actor forged a legitimate link between the new theatre and the fashionable theatrical venues of Europe and North America. The advertisement for the opening (Fig 3.21) prominently announces the cost of the theatre, and the presence of 'The Greatest English-Speaking Actor' suggests opulence and grandeur. The text 'FORBES-ROBERTSON' is the largest on the advert, followed by 'SHERMAN GRAND', as if to connect the two.

⁵⁸ 'Forbes Robertson to Open Calgary's Fine New Theatre Feb. 5', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 22 January 1912, p. 1.

⁵⁹ See, for example, Robert Edwards, 'Mail Contract', *Calgary Eye Opener*, 10 February 1912, p. 2.

⁶⁰ 'Forbes Robertson to [...]', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 22 January 1912, p. 3.

⁶¹ *Calgary's Grand Story* (Calgary: UP, 2005), p. 6.

**FORBES ROBERTSON TO
OPEN CALGARY'S FINE
NEW THEATRE FEB. 5**



FORBES ROBERTSON,
Eminent Actor who will open the Sherman Grand theatre two weeks from today

**Eminent Actor Will Deliver
Opening Address at the
Sherman Grand**

**ONE OF THE LARGEST
HOUSES IN THE WEST**

**Seats Over Fifteen Hundred—
Is Modern and Entirely
Fireproof**

The new Sherman Grand theatre will be opened on Feb. 5 next, with a performance of "The Passing of the Third Floor Back," by Forbes Robertson, the distinguished English actor and his specially selected London company, who are at present touring the principal towns of the United States.

Mr. Robertson has been specially invited to read the opening speech before the curtain goes up, and at the conclusion of the play Mr. Sherman has arranged for a public reception on the stage, so that those who are present at the first

Fig 3.20: Newspaper article announcing Forbes-Robertson's inauguration of the Sherman Grand Theatre (22 January 1912).⁶²

⁶² 'Forbes Robertson to Open Calgary's Fine New Theatre Feb. 5', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 22 January 1912, p. 1.



Fig 3.21: Advert for the opening of the Sherman Grand Theatre (26 January 1912).⁶³

Forbes-Robertson was due to play at the Lyric Theatre in Calgary from 12 February, so the Calgary media had already been promoting the arrival of Forbes-Robertson in the region, but, following the announcement of his appearance at the Sherman Grand, discussion of Forbes-Robertson proliferated in the local press. The public discourse created such an interest in the event that advance tickets sold out within six hours.⁶⁴ The *Calgary Daily Herald* described Forbes-Robertson's upcoming performance as 'the magnet of enthusiasm and anticipation in society circles'.⁶⁵ The press fused the personae of the private and public Forbes-Robertson with the fictional Stranger he was to play, claiming that he 'creates about himself an atmosphere that seems almost Christlike in its gently mystical haze' and that '[i]t is seldom that the personality of

⁶³ 'Music and Drama', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 26 January 1912, p. 5.

⁶⁴ 'Sold out in Six Hours', *Star-Phoenix*, 6 February 1912, p. 5.

⁶⁵ 'Forbes-Robertson Coming to the Lyric', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 18 January 1912, p. 5; 'Paris fashions show a conservative note', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 24 January 1912, p. 14; 'Music and Drama', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 26 January 1912, p. 5; 'What the Press Agents Say', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 29 January 1912, p. 5.

an actor is so remarkably in harmony with the role he is representing as is that of Forbes-Robertson in the mysterious and inspiring individuality of the Stranger'.⁶⁶ One reviewer commented that 'the charm of the play emanates directly from the alluring personality of Forbes-Robertson', with the fusion of selves as an attraction.⁶⁷

Upon his arrival in Calgary, representatives of the theatre took Forbes-Robertson on a tour of the town and told him of its speedy growth and prosperity. During a speech made at the performance, he congratulated the town on their new theatre and the expansion of their city.⁶⁸ As a renowned actor respected for his artistic performances, Forbes-Robertson's arrival in the town indicated the theatre's (and, by extension, the city's) cultured modernity. The theatre adjoined the Lougheed Building – a mixed-use building that symbolised Calgary's commercial expansion, while the theatre signified its cultural aspirations. Following the event, James W. Davidson commented in *The Morning Albertan* that the opening of the theatre was evidence that Calgary was entering the 'big city class' and emphasised the importance of entertainment venues in the development of cities.⁶⁹ In 1901 the population of Calgary was 4,091, but by 1911 this had expanded to 43,704 – an increase of 1,068% (for comparison, the population of Canada grew by 34% in the same period), and a swelling society required entertainment.⁷⁰ Lougheed also prompted the construction of the Norman Block building on Stephen Avenue, which contained the Lyric Theatre in the rear (opened on 5 September 1904) and other businesses (such as a tailor shop, a drug store, and a grocery store).⁷¹ The Empire Theatre (opened on 28 December 1908) – a home for modern vaudeville – belonged to the Empire Theatre Block on 8th Avenue, another commercial block that also hosted a fashionable men's out-fitting store and a Parisian

⁶⁶ 'Forbes-Robertson at the Lyric Feb. 5', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 18 January 1912, p. 5; 'Forbes-Robertson in "The Passing of the Third Floor Back"', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 1 February 1912, p. 5.

⁶⁷ 'Forbes-Robertson at the Lyric', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 13 January 1912, p.5.

⁶⁸ 'Forbes Robertson Opens Playhouse', *Albertan*, 6 February 1912, p. 5; 'Forbes-Robertson Warmly Welcomed by Local Audience', *Calgary News-Telegram*, 6 February 1912, p.3.

⁶⁹ 'Canada's Finest Theatre', *Morning Albertan*, 6 February 1912, p. 1.

⁷⁰ 'Table XIV. Population of Cities [...]' (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1912), http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/statcan/CS98-1911-1.pdf, [accessed 31 May 2019], p. 554.

⁷¹ 'Lyric Theatre Is Opened', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 6 September 1904, p. 3; 'New Firms for Calgary', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 14 July 1904, p. 4.

hairdressing and beauty parlour.⁷² The city therefore had a history of combining entertainment with commercial enterprises and the size of the Sherman Grand indicates that Calgary placed a value on entertainment in its business operations.

Ticket prices for the opening of *Passing* ranged from \$1 to \$5 at a time when typical admission to an evening performance at the Calgary Empire ranged from 25c to 50c. Even tickets for *Passing* at the Empire Theatre in the neighbouring city of Edmonton (8 to 11 February 1912) ranged from \$1 to \$3.⁷³ The event was priced out of the reach of the masses at a time when twenty cents an hour constituted a fair wage and the average worker received \$15 to \$18 a week.⁷⁴ That it was exclusively expensive indicates that it was a society event designed to attract the establishment and encourage patrons to travel from outside the town. The event made \$11,000 CAD (equivalent to £149,144 in 2018) but it transpired that it had cost \$5,000 CAD (equivalent to £67,792.85 in 2018) to secure a Forbes-Robertson and company booking.⁷⁵ Sherman therefore acknowledged that Forbes-Robertson's value was more than purely commercial.

The temporal and geographical contexts of the performance illustrate that Forbes-Robertson's celebrity – with its culturally coded message – also had a political and cultural function at the Sherman Grand event. Readers of the *Calgary Eye Opener* knew Robert ('Bob') Edwards (1860-1922) for lampooning public and political individuals in his satirical analyses of regional affairs.⁷⁶ In his review of the opening night, he articulated the political disharmony at the time in terms alluding to *Passing*. He called the play a 'brilliant affair' and added

The role of the Passer-By was magnificently played by Forbes-Robertson but there is no use slobbering over him at this late stage of the game. Be that as it may we should very much like to see the Passer-By try his soulful methods on a roomful of cantankerous wildcats like Lemieux, Monk, H.G. Macdonald, Foster, Glen Campbell, Oliver Pugsley, Rod Michael, Sam Hughes, Wilfrid himself, and a few more. If he could make them all

⁷² 'Empire Theatre', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 28 December 1908, p. 5; 'New Men's Furnishings and Clothing Business', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 16 December 1908, p. 11; and Advertisement, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 28 December 1908, p. 2.

⁷³ 'Empire Theatre', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 28 December 1908, p. 5; 'Empire Theatre', *Edmonton Journal*, 3 February 1912, p. 5.

⁷⁴ Smith, (2005), p. 19.

⁷⁵ 'Mr. Sherman's Bad Break', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 19 March 1912, p. 6; 'Claims Theatre is Running at a Loss', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 20 March 1912, p. 20.

⁷⁶ Edwards founded the *Calgary Eye Opener* in 1902 and edited it until his death in 1922.

shake hands and go off on a pleasant drunk together, Forbes-Robertson would indeed be the wonder of the age and his Passer-By acclaimed by children yet unborn.⁷⁷

His refusal to ‘slobber’ over Forbes-Robertson is probably a jibe at the *Calgary Daily Herald* for their gushing praise and promotion of Forbes-Robertson prior to his arrival. The ‘wildcats’ were politicians in Sir Wilfrid Laurier’s (1841-1919) government; Edwards implied that they resembled the miscreants of the boarding-house in *Passing* in need of placating. The disharmony amongst the politicians was partly the result of their divided heritage. Of the 50,000 inhabitants of Calgary, most were incomers from the US, Eastern Canada, and the UK, with over 70% of the population claiming British descent. Smith observes that the town was generally pro-British in its outlook and the Dictionary of Canadian Biography describes Lougheed as an ‘admirer of the British empire’.⁷⁸ The divided ancestries were a cause of contention, particularly on the subject of free trade with the US and the level of military support Canada should offer the UK, and there were also divisions between Eastern and Western Canadians.⁷⁹

The press highlighted Forbes-Robertson’s connection to Phelps and one review (reprinted from a San Francisco news source) reminded its readers that ‘Forbes-Robertson is recognized as the foremost actor on the English stage. On him has fallen the mantle left by Irving’.⁸⁰ The emphasis on his theatrical lineage rendered him the product of a conspicuously British heritage of actors.⁸¹ According to Smith, ‘Calgarians of British ancestry embraced Forbes-Robertson and his touring company. The English spoken on the stage on opening night, and during the following two evenings and afternoon matinee, warmly brought instant memories of the “old country.”’⁸² For British immigrants and their subsequent progenies, Forbes-Robertson’s presence at the opening of the theatre was symbolic of an idea of ‘home’ and a glorification of British heritage. On the stage in Calgary, Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity endorsed and promoted the political ideologies that were emerging in the new city by carrying a cultural message of British

⁷⁷ ‘Mail Contract’, *Calgary Eye Opener*, 10 February 1912, p. 2.

⁷⁸ ‘LOUGHEED, Sir JAMES ALEXANDER’, in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, ed. by David J. Hall and Donald B. Smith, vol. 15 (University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lougheed_james_alexander_15E.html [accessed 5 March 2019].

⁷⁹ Smith, (2005), pp. 18-19.

⁸⁰ ‘Forbes Robertson at the Lyric’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 13 January 1912, p. 5.

⁸¹ ‘Some reflections of a “Passerby”’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 10 January 1912, p. 4; ‘What the Press Agents Say’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 29 January 1912, p. 5; ‘Forbes-Robertson—Irving’s Successor’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 2 February 1912, p. 5; and ‘Forbes-Robertson in “The Passing of the Third Floor Back”’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 1 February 1912, p. 5.

⁸² (2005), p. 17.

superiority and imperialism. Despite the rift in the city's political relations, the city's American economic elite were also in attendance at the opening, suggesting that the draw of celebrity overrode domestic animosities.

Forbes-Robertson's celebrity had a prolonged endorsement for the city. Displayed on the cover of the programme for the Sherman Grand's opening night was an advertisement stating, 'We hope that you'll enjoy yourself here but you'll make your money in real estate through Graham-Hamilton-Campbell, Ltd' (see Fig 3.22). The theatre was rooted in the economic prosperity of the city and was an icon of Calgary's investment in its future. The week after the opening performance, *Calgary Daily Herald* announced that the Calgary market was booming and described that

[while] Forbes-Robertson, the eminent English actor, was in the city he was shown over Calgary by a member of this firm and was so favourably impressed with what he saw that upon leaving this city he left \$10,000 [equivalent to £136,023.58 in 2018] with F. C. Lowes & Co. to be invested in Calgary realty.⁸³

This illustrates that Forbes-Robertson's celebrity had a commercial value that extended beyond the theatre industry – his presence at the opening of the new theatre, in a new city, and his subsequent (reported) personal investment in it promoted their shared ideologies.

⁸³ 'Market is Extremely Active at Present', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 13 February 1912, p. 16.



Fig 3.22: Cover of the programme for opening night at the Sherman Grand Theatre (5 February 1912).⁸⁴

3.4 Forbes-Robertson and Women's Suffrage

Following Forbes-Robertson's knighthood on 3 June 1913, *Votes for Women* newspaper publicly extended their congratulations:

All Suffragists will unite in hearty congratulations to Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson on his new honour. As an actor of a very high intellectual order he has won a great public all over the world; but we venture to think that nothing in his career will live so long after him or is

⁸⁴ Glenbow Library, reproduced from Smith, (2005), p. 15.

so deserving of honour as the record of what he has done in support of the women's fight for freedom.⁸⁵

Forbes-Robertson's stance on women's suffrage was a long-held position that he claimed he had taken since childhood and was the result of his upbringing as, in his youth, he was acquainted with key supporters of the movement.⁸⁶ In a 1908 address, he said that his mother had been amongst the leading pioneers of women's suffrage and had been at the 'heart and soul of the movement'.⁸⁷ Forbes-Robertson's niece, Beatrice, was a prominent activist for women's suffrage in Britain and in the US. In her memoirs she described how all of the Forbes-Robertson family were active suffragists in varying capacities.⁸⁸ She recalled that her grandmother (Forbes-Robertson's mother) ruled their childhood home as a matriarch who 'reigned supreme' and had supported women entering professions and receiving greater freedoms decades before the suffrage movement gained momentum.⁸⁹ Forbes-Robertson was the godson of David Masson (1822-1907) who publicly championed women's access to higher education as early as July 1869 when he spoke at the first public meeting organised by the London Society for Women's Suffrage.⁹⁰

Later in life Forbes-Robertson worked alongside actresses such as Ellen Terry, Bernhardt, Modjeska, Wilton, and Campbell, all of whom were able to create their celebrity in the face of expectations of conventions for Victorian women. Terry and Bernhardt, for example, both had children without being married and yet both were revered for their acting abilities and stage personae.⁹¹ Forbes-Robertson had spent his entire career surrounded by relatively emancipated female colleagues with control over their careers and finances and saw that women were quite capable of receiving enfranchisement by right. He felt duty-bound to support women's suffrage

⁸⁵ 'Items of Interest', *Votes for Women*, 6 June 1913, p. 2.

⁸⁶ 'The Actresses' Franchise League', *Votes for Women*, 24 December 1908, p. 11.

⁸⁷ 'The Actresses' Suffrage League', *The Stage*, 24 December 1908, p. 17.

⁸⁸ Fitzmaurice, p. 337.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 67-70.

⁹⁰ Elizabeth Crawford, *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide. 1866-1928* (London: UCL Press, 1999), p. 4.

⁹¹ For discussion of Sarah Bernhardt see: Mary Louise Roberts, 'Rethinking Female Celebrity: The Eccentric Star of Nineteenth-Century France', in *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 103-116. For discussion of Marie Wilton's business activities see: Davis, 2000. For discussion of the celebrity and reputation of Ellen Terry, Campbell, and Lillie Langtry see: Sos Eltis, (2005), pp. 169-188.

in what was to become both a private and a public venture. Following a 1914 police raid on the Women's Social and Political Union (WSPU) offices, newspapers reported the discovery that Forbes-Robertson subscribed to the group having donated £5 that year (equivalent to £471.30 in 2018) for which he could face legal action.⁹² The WSPU supported militant action to press for political change (they split from the National Union of Women's Suffrage Societies (NUWSS) in 1903 over this stance), so Forbes-Robertson's subscription may have been shocking. However, his sympathies for the cause were already public knowledge and his association with women's suffrage was an important aspect of his public image, as shall be demonstrated within this chapter.

Forbes-Robertson may well have believed in women's suffrage since childhood, but he appears to have used his celebrity to attempt to influence political decisions only after his marriage in December 1900. Elliott was a dedicated women's suffrage activist committed to producing social and political events. She co-founded the Actresses' Franchise League (AFL) in 1908 and became its president shortly after Madge Kendal resigned from the position the following year.⁹³ The other co-founders were Winifred Mayo (1870-1967), Sime Seruya (1876-1955), and Adeline Bourne (1873-1965), who were all actresses already involved in other suffrage organisations. Mayo, for instance, joined the WSPU in 1908 and was arrested for her militant activities in 1908, 1909, 1910 and 1911.⁹⁴ They called on those of the profession who supported female suffrage to join them in their pursuit.

Claire Hirshfield shows that the press and public had an affinity for members of the League. Unlike the stereotype of the militant suffragettes, the glamour and beauty of the theatre celebrities made them particularly attractive.⁹⁵ One reporter described AFL members at a meeting as a 'picturesque gathering of non-militant and delightfully gowned suffragists' while another described how the AFL was 'doing its best to mitigate the hostility that is felt so naturally

⁹² 'The Funds of the Militants', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 6 June 1914, p. 9.

⁹³ Crawford, p. 4.

⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 393.

⁹⁵ 'The Actresses' Franchise League and the Campaign for Women's Suffrage, 1908-1914', *Theatre Research International*, 10(2), 1985, 129-153 <doi:10.1017/S030788330001066X> [accessed 10 July 2017], p. 130.

towards the militants'.⁹⁶ Although the League was not officially connected with any of the other suffrage organisations it did become biased towards the WSPU, which resulted in unrest and the resignations of vice-presidents Irene and Violet Vanbrugh (1872-1949, 1867-1942).⁹⁷

Nonetheless, most of its members were not in a financial position to risk imprisonment for militant action, as missing performances would damage their future stage prospects.⁹⁸ The AFL did contribute to the cohesive efforts of all the suffrage societies at mass events. In Fig 3.23 Elliott is pictured in her capacity as President of the AFL, complete with suffrage sash, with fellow actress Lena Ashwell (1872-1957) at the Coronation Procession on 17 June 1911. This procession was held a week before the coronation of King George V and all of the various suffrage societies were present in the hope that such a large procession at such a momentous moment would attract attention to gain the vote.

⁹⁶ 'Actress Suffragists. Stage Celebrities Demand the Vote', *London Evening Standard*, 18 December 1908, p. 8., and 'The Lighter Side of an Agitation', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 14 February 1913, p. 4.

⁹⁷ Crawford, p. 4; Katherine Kelly, 'The Actresses' Franchise League Prepares For War: Feminist Theatre in Camouflage', *Theatre Survey*, 35(1), 1994, 121-137.
<doi:10.1017/S004055740000260X> [accessed 10 July 2017], p. 123.

⁹⁸ Julie Holledge, *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre* (London: Hachette Digital, 1981), E-book, p. 1885.



Fig 3.23: Lena Ashwell with Gertrude Elliott, during the 1911 Coronation Procession.⁹⁹

The acting community, and the AFL in particular, offered appropriate figureheads for female suffrage. The theatre was one realm where women had largely similar opportunities and (in the upper echelons of the profession) had the same earning potential as their male counterparts. Additionally, compared to their contemporary women, they enjoyed relative freedom. In 1913, *The Era* described how the actress had ‘already won for herself an enviable position of independence,’ and illustrated how actresses were self-supporting and equal in their dedication to their professions as their male colleagues. The writer argued that actresses were ‘the most vital, the most impressive of all female forces: and when we find the leaders of the dramatic profession enrolled on the side of Woman’s Franchise we may well expect that it will be gained

⁹⁹ LSE Library, 7JCC/O/02/048.

eventually'.¹⁰⁰ That is, the freedoms of actresses are not only evident with the benefit of hindsight as they were also acknowledged at the time. Actresses were ideal messengers for the suffrage movement as they were trained to use their voices and present their bodies on stage and were therefore effective and professional communicators. They also moved around the country on tours with their companies and so could reach large audiences as political meetings were arranged before their performances. From 1913 the AFL arranged special speaking classes for women giving speeches at such events.¹⁰¹

It is difficult to quantify how much of Forbes-Robertson's activity on behalf of women's suffrage was due to the influence of his wife, as his increased output also correlates with the increased momentum of the suffrage movement in general. He was a patron of the AFL and, from 1913, a Vice-President of the Men's League for Women's Suffrage (MLWS).¹⁰² Nonetheless, Claire Tylee argues that there 'is no doubt that [Forbes-Robertson's] name and support lent considerable respectability and prestige to the AFL and to the Cause'.¹⁰³ She classes the inauguration meeting of the AFL amongst his most notable public displays of support for women's suffrage. On 17 December 1908 almost 400 London actors attended the meeting in the Criterion Restaurant at Piccadilly Circus where fans and autograph hunters waited for the celebrities to arrive.¹⁰⁴

Newspaper accounts of the event detail that Forbes-Robertson took the chair, addressed his audience as 'Women of my calling' and 'my dear sisters', read letters of apologies from absentees, and, 'with his beautiful voice and earnest manner', recounted his lifelong belief in women's suffrage.¹⁰⁵ The speakers included Evelyn Sharp (novelist and journalist, 1869-1955),

¹⁰⁰ 'Actresses and the Franchise', *Era*, 8 March 1913, p. 19.

¹⁰¹ Holledge, p. 1887.

¹⁰² Formed in 1907, the MLWS had no particular political party affiliation and was officially non-militant in nature but supported some of the other militant organisations in their propaganda work (Crawford, 406).

¹⁰³ 'A better world for both': men, cultural transformation and the suffragettes', in *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*, ed. by Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1998), pp. 140-156, p. 146.

¹⁰⁴ Holledge, p. 1878.

¹⁰⁵ 'Actresses and the Vote. New Movement Inauguration', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 18 December 1908, p. 3, and Sydney Carstone, 'Ladies Letter', *Northern Whig*, 22 December 1908, p. 9. Emily Emmet would later call him a 'warm advocate' ('Forbes-Robertson Is Warm Advocate of Equal Suffrage', *Bridgeport Evening Farmer*, 18 May 1915).

Mrs. Jacob Thomas Grein (Alice Augusta Greeven, who assisted her drama critic husband in theatrical translations, 1874-1944), Madeleine Lucette Ryley (dramatist, 1858-1934), Cicely Hamilton (actress and journalist, 1872-1952), and Eva Moore (actress, 1868-1955). The speeches largely focussed on the issue of acquiring equal pay for women. Sharp argued that ‘women were not able to enforce trades union rates of wages from the Government [...]. Working women would never be able to improve their industrial position until they could back their unions by a Parliamentary vote’.¹⁰⁶ At the meeting’s conclusion, Forbes-Robertson presented the resolution, which ran:

That this meeting of actresses calls upon the Government immediately to extend the franchise to women; that women claim the franchise as a necessary protection for the workers under modern industrial conditions, and maintain that by their labour they have earned the right to this defence.¹⁰⁷

The emphasis of the call of the actors in the AFL was on the creation of equitable labour conditions based on their industrial role as professionals and labourers. In an interview in the 1980s, Jane Comfort, who had been a very young member of the AFL, described the event and recalled how easy it had been to recruit actresses to the AFL and meeting on the grounds of achieving equal pay.¹⁰⁸ Forbes-Robertson’s presence at this meeting would have lasting significance. Tylee explains that he used his influence to persuade Shaw to write the play *Press Cuttings* for the AFL West End matinee in July 1909.¹⁰⁹ The play was a satirical sketch of the anti-suffragists and politicians. Suffragettes do not appear in the play, as if influencing events *in absentia*, while the anti-suffragists are depicted as controlling and menacing.¹¹⁰ Nonetheless, the AFL was his wife’s domain, and while he continued to support the AFL and women’s suffrage generally, he did not encroach on her Presidency.

3.4.1. Forbes-Robertson’s ‘Declaration of Faith’

On 1 February 1909 the WSPU held an ‘At Home’ at Queen’s Hall, London. Forbes-Robertson spoke at this event, outlining a defence of the cause and his reasons for feeling obliged to speak

¹⁰⁶ ‘Actresses and the Vote. A New Franchise League’, *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 18 December 1908, p. 5.

¹⁰⁷ ‘The Actresses’ Franchise League’, *Votes for Women*, 24 December 1908, p. 11.

¹⁰⁸ Holledge, p. 1880.

¹⁰⁹ p. 147.

¹¹⁰ Ellen Ecker Dolgin, *Shaw and the Actresses Franchise League: Staging Equality* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2015), pp. 140-141.

on behalf of women's rights. *Votes for Women* reported the speech verbatim the following week.¹¹¹ He opened by declaring that he 'felt it [his] duty to make a public statement of my faith in this reform'. It is not clear whether he felt this duty because he was a man or because he was a celebrity with a level of public influence. He continued that he could understand that some men, who were not fully informed of the benefits of having enfranchisement extended to women, might not want to relinquish any power to their wives, but that he could not fathom the reasoning of women who did not support getting the vote. He then listed the typical arguments of the 'antis' and proceeded to oppose these views. His arguments generally followed the reasoning that women had the potential to be of 'absolutely equal' intelligence to men if they were given the same opportunities of learning. To those concerned about women entering parliament he offered, 'Suppose one brilliant woman, in the course of years, is found in the House – or two or three? Won't she be an exceptional and extraordinary person if she does get there?' For those who were concerned that enfranchising women would lead to instability in the country, he listed examples of other countries where women had the vote and there had been no anarchy. Thus the first part of his speech was measured and logical.

As the speech continued, he built up passion: 'when it comes to talking of women and the law and custom, I cannot laugh, except with rage. I won't speak of it; because I don't want to have an inarticulate fury'. Given that Forbes-Robertson was a public figure associated with gentle behaviours, chivalry, and perfect rhetoric, for his listeners to imagine him being reduced to 'inarticulate fury' was to understand the extent of the atrocities. His direction then shifted from describing his own rage to making a general statement for the whole of society:

we want this vote in order that for future generations the bearer of mankind shall be brought up properly and fitly, and that the world may improve and advance to that exalted state which we can only dream of at the present moment. Then we may talk about a highly organised society – when all the bars in front of the women are swept away, when every calling, every trade, every profession that they can follow is open to them.

His use of the pronoun 'we', such as in 'we want this vote' and 'we can only dream of', indicates that he was urging the listener to feel united in a common struggle that affected all of humanity. This device is particularly effective when used by a celebrity as the listener or fan already self-identifies with the character traits associated with the celebrity. Calling for every profession to open the doors to women was particularly resounding coming from a theatre celebrity as he

¹¹¹ 'A Declaration of Faith', *Votes for Women*, 11 February 1909, p. 326-327.

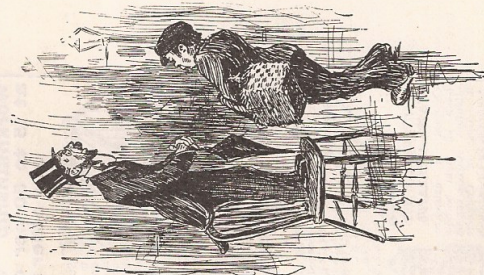
belonged to a profession that could boast of success in creating a level of equality. His final argument maintained that the issue of women being physically inferior to men was irrelevant, and closed the speech by invoking the spirits of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) and John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) to bring about the reform they had campaigned for.¹¹²

On 13 February 1909, *The Graphic* lampooned his direction for men to make public their declarations of faith. The article, along with the three accompanying cartoons by artist, Thomas Maybank (1869-1929), dispenses satirical advice to male advocates of female suffrage on how to make their declarations public (Fig 3.24). It suggests taking a kitchen chair and standing on the street to speak to a public ‘ravenous’ to hear the declaration, or pooling the financial resources of other advocates to book a venue from which to make the declaration. A railway station provides opportunity to communicate with the public, but neither a church nor a theatre during the intermission is recommended ‘as usually the management is absurdly jealous of any rivalry with the entertainment provided in the programme’. It recommends not using the methods adopted by suffragettes (the suggestion in the cartoon is chaining yourself to a post box).¹¹³ Satirical intent aside, the article demonstrates that not every man has a ‘public’ like a celebrity of Forbes-Robertson’s status. The first cartoon illustrates a passer-by eagerly listening to the ‘declaration’ of a man on a chair in the street, and the second pictures a gathering of men on a stage with a woman in the audience holding her hand to her ear, presumably to encourage them to speak louder. The implication therein is that the public has little interest in the opinions of an ordinary man. While his call for men to declare their faith may have been subject to ridicule, the fact that it created sufficient interest to be made into a sketch illustrates that Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity influence in the matter had generated discussion.

¹¹² Both were writer activists for the emancipation of women. Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) was best known for *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) while John Stuart Mill (1806-1873) was known for *The Subjection of Women* (1869).

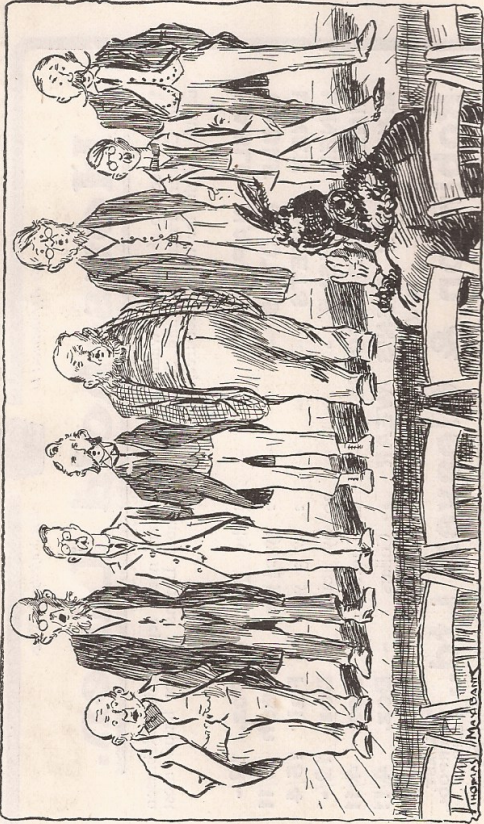
¹¹³ ‘The Suffragets: Hints for Male Advocates of “Votes for Women”’, *Graphic*, 13 February 1909, p. 218.

THE SUFFRAGETS: HINTS FOR MALE ADVOCATES OF "VOTES FOR WOMEN"



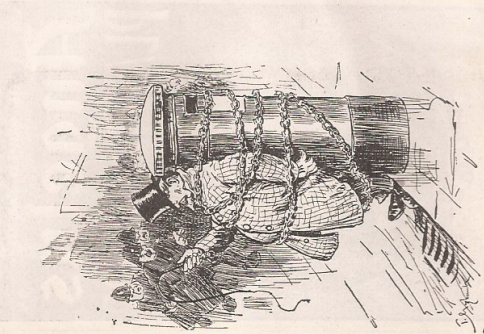
AN EXTREME PLATFORM

Mr. Forbes Robertson, addressing a meeting of the Women's Social and Political Union on February 1, declared that it was the duty of every man who believed in the cause of Woman's Suffrage (which he described as "the greatest reform of modern



THE MOST ECONOMICAL METHOD: A SIMULTANEOUS STATEMENT

times") to make a public declaration of his faith. Our artist, Mr. Maybank, has endeavoured by a few suggestions to smooth the path of duty thus pointed out to other male converts—with or without charming and persuasive wives.



AN APPROVED DEVICE

Our artist, Mr. Maybank, has endeavoured by a few suggestions to smooth the path of duty thus pointed out to other male converts—with or without charming and persuasive wives.

Fig 3.24: Cartoon lampooning Forbes-Robertson's 'Declaration of Faith' in *The Graphic* (13 February 1909).¹¹⁴

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Following this Declaration of Faith, Forbes-Robertson continued to campaign for the cause across the country throughout 1909. On 10 March 1909 he addressed the City Men on behalf of the London Society for Women's Suffrage, arguing that a strong mind could win over brute strength.¹¹⁵ On 6 April 1909 he addressed a gathering of (mainly) women at the Grand Assembly Rooms in Newcastle, and Birmingham Women's Suffrage Society invited him to speak at the Grand Hotel in Birmingham on 26 April 1909. While the listeners at these venues generally belonged to the bourgeoisie, he also advocated for the enfranchisement of women in a range of professions and for working-class women. He argued that these women paid their taxes but did not have a say in what those taxes were used for.¹¹⁶

Throughout this period Forbes-Robertson increasingly could not be dissociated from his suffrage image. On 28 April 1909, Forbes-Robertson and Elliott presented *Passing* in the Memorial Theatre at the Shakespeare Festival Celebrations at Stratford-upon-Avon. Despite the performance not being Shakespeare, reportedly festivalgoers overflowed the theatre and received the performance well. Following the play Forbes-Robertson played the part of Buckingham in *Henry VIII* Act II Scene I with some of Benson's company, after which the audience prevailed on him to give a speech on Shakespeare and the acting profession.¹¹⁷ In Susan Carlson's analysis of this event she describes it as a time of heightened politics as the Festival (19 April to 8 May) occurred amidst the Stratford-upon-Avon by-election where the main candidates were the Unionist/Conservative Philip Foster (1865-1933) and the Liberal Joseph Martin (1852-1923).¹¹⁸ The increased media coverage in the town for the by-election was an opportunity for suffrage activists to hold rallies in the public eye, and the presence of actors of the AFL in the town as they carried with them an association with women's suffrage enhanced the performative quality of politics. The performers appropriated Shakespeare plays to generate a suffragist message. The festival was therefore an exploration of traditional narratives of women's roles and the suffrage refiguring of these roles. Sophie Duncan describes Elliott's 'politicized presence' and continues

¹¹⁵ 'An Appeal to Men', *London Daily News*, 11 March 1909, p. 3.

¹¹⁶ 'Mr. Forbes-Robertson and Women's Suffrage', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 7 April 1909, p. 7; 'Mr. Forbes-Robertson On the Ability of Women', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 27 April 1909, p. 7.

¹¹⁷ 'Stratford Festival', *Birmingham Gazette and Express*, 29 April 1909, p. 4.

¹¹⁸ 'The Suffrage Shrew: The Shakespeare Festival, "A Man's Play," and New Women', in *Shakespeare and the Twentieth Century: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress, Los Angeles*, ed. by Jonathan Bate et al. (London: Associated UP, 1996), pp. 85-102, p. 85-88.

to explain that the locations of ‘Shakespeare-themed parades, sermons and festivities all became sites of suffragist (or anti-suffragist) performance’.¹¹⁹ On 23 April, Forbes-Robertson gave an address on Shakespeare at Southwark Cathedral where Elliot, Terry, and Kendal – all prominent AFL names – had decorated the space with flowers. The repeated presence of the actors at public events articulating the right for enfranchisement meant that the suffrage activism of Forbes-Robertson and Elliott was compounded in their public images that mediated their shared political message.

3.4.2 Forbes-Robertson Branding for Women’s Suffrage

Forbes-Robertson’s name and celebrity were often used as an inducement to draw listeners to suffrage talks. For instance, on 31 August 1909 he spoke at the Montgomery Hall in Sheffield upon the invitation of the Sheffield Society of Women’s Suffrage. The notice of the event in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* mentioned only that there was to be a ‘SPECIAL MEETING’ with the name of the speaker ‘FORBES ROBERTSON’ below in the largest text. Tickets for this event sold for 2s. 6d for reserved seats, or 1s. 6d otherwise (equivalent to £12.80 and £7.68 in 2018 respectively).¹²⁰ The speech delivered in Sheffield appears to have been the same as the one he delivered at the Queen’s Hall in February: he went through the typical arguments given by anti-suffragists for opposing the vote and challenged them.

Following the meeting, both reporters and letters from members of the public discussed the event in the local newspapers. The *Sheffield Daily Independent* noted that ‘Mr Forbes-Robertson’s interest in the women’s cause is well known,’ and said that the meeting was mainly attended by those already converted to the cause, although there were some dissenters in attendance.¹²¹ The reporter in the *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* highlighted the importance of showcasing a celebrity, like Forbes-Robertson, to increase interest in the cause: ‘In days when a section of the advocates of Women’s Suffrage compete so pointedly with other public entertainers, there is something specially fitting in the spectacle of an actor taking part in

¹¹⁹ Sophie Duncan, *Shakespeare’s Women and the Fin de Siecle* (Oxford: UP, 2016), p. 201.

¹²⁰ ‘Women’s Suffrage’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 28 August 1909, p. 1.

¹²¹ ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson on the Suffrage Cause’, *Sheffield Daily Independent*, 1 September 1909, p. 10.

feminine propaganda'.¹²² This illustrates how, even as early as 1909, political causes needed a celebrity advocate to be heard over the cacophony of cosmopolitan entertainments. The *Sheffield Daily Telegraph* printed photographs of the queue of women waiting for the opening of the doors to the event, and another of Forbes-Robertson with a Sheffield clergyperson (Fig 3.25). The *Sheffield Daily Independent* also printed a photograph of the speaker arriving at the venue under the heading, 'An Eloquent Advocate' (Fig 3.26). There seems to be little to differentiate the reporting of this political event from a social or theatrical event. Political activism for the suffrage cause clearly used the modes and systems of celebrity for self-promotion, and theatre celebrities, such as Forbes-Robertson, were useful activists in drawing listeners.



Fig 3.25: Women queuing at Montgomery Hall ahead of Forbes-Robertson's suffrage speech, and Forbes-Robertson with a Sheffield minister (1909).¹²³

¹²² 'Women and the Vote', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1909, p. 6.

¹²³ 'Votes for Women', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1909, p. 9.



Fig 3.26: Forbes-Robertson arriving at Montgomery Hall to give his speech at the suffrage meeting (1909).¹²⁴

3.4.3 Passing and *'The Cause'*

Not only did Forbes-Robertson speak at suffrage rallies and meetings, he also made speeches on women's suffrage during his curtain-call after performances, invoking a level of fluidity between his on-stage character and his private self in the delivery of the political message.¹²⁵ His youngest daughter, Diana, recalled one of her parents' stories from their theatre days:

We loved the story of the play scene in *Hamlet*; Dad instructed the company to invent their own words to make a confused babble at the cry, 'Lights, lights,' and our cousin Maud Buchanan, one of the ladies of the Court of Denmark, was heard leading the girls in the chant, 'Votes for women, votes for women'.¹²⁶

¹²⁴ 'An Eloquent Advocate', *Sheffield Daily Independent*, 1 September 1909, p. 4.

¹²⁵ Fitzmaurice, p. 337.

¹²⁶ p. 9.

This account demonstrates how theatrical performances could become politicised and used for public demonstrations. In this instance the plight for women's suffrage was synchronised with the story of *Hamlet* and further cemented the association of emancipation with Forbes-Robertson.

The character of the Stranger in *Passing* was likewise integral to Forbes-Robertson's activist activities. By 1911, Forbes-Robertson was exclusively touring *Passing*. Therefore, when Forbes-Robertson appeared at a Conservative and Unionist Women's Franchise Association (CUWFA) gathering on 13 July 1911, the recipients' interpretation of the public personality of Forbes-Robertson would have been highly influenced by his role as the Stranger.¹²⁷ In the play, one of the sinners whom the Stranger converts is Stasia, or 'the Slut'. Stasia, who was born in prison, is the maid of the house and badly treated and overworked by the landlady who threatens to return her to the slums. Her plight and redemption was particularly significant to the messages delivered at the CUWFA gathering. Forbes-Robertson argued that the women's suffrage issue was about more than getting the vote for women:

[He] wanted to see the doors opened, so that every woman should have the opportunity of pursuing every business or profession, and pursuing it to the end. The time would come when women would plead in law courts, and give out God's word from pulpits.¹²⁸

His address followed Maude Royden's (1876-1956) speech that described the plight of working women who often earned unfair wages (some as little as four shillings a week – equivalent to £20 in 2018) and that some women 'when they could not live on their wages, sold themselves'.¹²⁹ The *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser* reported that the attendees of the event included ladies, captains, honourables, reverends, and doctors, suggesting a rather bourgeois collective. The meaning of Forbes-Robertson as a celebrity – as a gentleman, professional, and with connotations of the Christ-like Stranger who saved working-class Stasia from vice and desperation – could be transferred to the listeners and reminded them that they could be liberators by following his cause. This serves as an example both of the symbolic value of a theatre celebrity in the role of an activist and of how political causes could harness the personalities of an actor's previous roles.

¹²⁷ The gathering was held at Compton Verney, the home of Lady Willoughby de Broke, in Warwickshire.

¹²⁸ 'Conservative & Unionist Women's Franchise Association. Mr. Forbes Robertson at Kineton', *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser & Leamington Gazette*, 15 July 1911, p. 5.

¹²⁹ Maude Royden was elected to the executive committee of the NUWSS in 1911.

3.4.4 *Merging of Selves, Hamlet the 'Reformer'*

Chapter 2 discussed how the press welcomed Forbes-Robertson's return to the UK for his Farewell Tour in Autumn 1912 given his noted absence while he toured the USA and Canada, with an emphasis on the fanfare surrounding his Farewell Season at Drury Lane commencing 22 March 1913. Forbes-Robertson did not maintain a low profile during the week before his return to the London stage and an analysis of his activities solidifies the idea that the public image that he used for his suffrage activism was very much related to his on-stage performances. On Sunday 16 March, the O. P. Club hosted a dinner in his honour at the Hotel Cecil with nearly 500 guests and made tributes to Forbes-Robertson throughout the evening.¹³⁰ This was a private event boasting a combination of fashionable venue and distinguished guest list. In his welcome address, the Chairman, Percy Barringer, offered that Forbes-Robertson was the most distinguished guest the O. P. Club had had the occasion of celebrating, and discussed his tributes to the stage and his major contributions to contemporary drama. Shaw lauded Forbes-Robertson for his 'genius', quipping that 'if the greatest actor on the English stage is really going to leave it, the occasion would be celebrated more fittingly by a fast than by a feast'. In Forbes-Robertson's speech he took the opportunity to discuss the changing character of British drama and the individuals (such as Irving, the Bancrofts, and Phelps) who had brought about this change, and also made a plea for the National Theatre, arguing that it was a 'scandal' that there was no Shakespeare Memorial Theatre in England.¹³¹

The high-profile event honoured Forbes-Robertson and branded him as a super-celebrity, a genius, a gentleman, and a professional. It would also have functioned as a networking opportunity for members of the acting community to interact with each other and with members of non-theatrical professions. The guests of the event mostly included representatives of the theatre community, but there were also prominent members of society, including doctors, captains, lords, and ladies present. For instance, the manager and the editor of *The Era* – a trade newspaper that followed theatrical events closely – were present, as were Lord and Lady Willoughby de Broke (1869-1923, 1868-1941), who had hosted the suffragist meeting at their home at Compton Verney in July 1911 discussed above. This was an ideal arena for the

¹³⁰ The Old Playgoers' Club was a theatrical debating club that met at the Hotel Cecil for monthly debates from 1900 after it broke away from the original Playgoers' Club.

¹³¹ 'Forbes-Robertson and Bernard Shaw', *Era*, 22 March 1913, p. 17.

circulation of ideas and opinions amongst a fusion of influential, educated, socially and politically active personalities.

On 18 March, two days later, Forbes-Robertson was to share the stage with Shaw again, but this time the Bishop of Lincoln (Dr. Frederick Cyril Nugent Hicks, 1872-1942) presided and they were also accompanied by a throat surgeon (Charles William Mansell-Moullin, 1851-1940) and the founder of the National Political League (NPL) (Mary Adelaide Broadhurst, 1860-1928), and the occasion was not a celebration but a protest. The event was a mass suffragist meeting hosted by the NPL at Kingsway Hall against the practice of forcibly feeding prisoners on hunger strike. The meeting's aims were to express the disapproval of forcible feeding and demand the government to end the practice. Additionally, the speakers argued that the only way to prevent the disorder would be to '[enfranchise] the women of the country, and so [remove] the grievance which is a cause of the present disorder'.¹³² Forbes-Robertson's speech likened force-feeding to torturous behaviours of the Middle Ages and suggested that, while he was in the US, he was assured that such action would never be tolerated there and the government's actions were making Britain 'the laughing stock of the world'. He played on his audience's sense of modernity and national pride to rouse their determination for the cause.

The reports in the press of the public's response to Forbes-Robertson's speech illustrates how his celebrity contributed to the proceedings. Jane E. Strickland wrote to the editor of the *Hastings Observer* in defence of the suffragists, quoting the statements of several 'eminent men' as persuasive material for men who thus far did not support women's suffrage. Quoting Forbes-Robertson's address at the Kingsway Hall demonstration, she described him as 'that most chivalrous of men'.¹³³ Another newspaper contributor argued that the policy of forcible feeding was degrading, not only to the woman being force-fed, but also

to gaoler, doctor, and prisoner, and a direct violation of personal rights affecting not only the person but every human being. This is the view taken by Sir Victor Horsley [1957-1916], Professor [Edward Albert Sharpey-] Schafer [1850-1935], the Bishop of Lincoln, Mr. Forbes Robertson, and, one might add, every decent right-thinking person.¹³⁴

¹³² 'Great Protest Meeting Against Forcible Feeding', *Votes for Women*, 28 March 1913, p. 868.

¹³³ Jane E. Strickland, 'Mrs Strickland on "Smaller Men who have Succeeded Gladstone"', *Hastings and St. Leonards Observer*, 22 March 1913, p. 6.

¹³⁴ M. Alexander, 'Women and Votes', *Northern Whig*, 10 April 1913, p. 10.

Horsley and Schafer were physiologists who both received knighthoods for their discoveries, while the Bishop of Lincoln had also been the Dean of Keeble at Oxford University. Forbes-Robertson was therefore being associated with very highly regarded and learned professionals. These reports illustrate that his public image as a chivalrous gentleman rendered him a charismatic individual and gave him the authority to speak and appeal to other men.

When Forbes-Robertson appeared at Drury Lane on Saturday 22 March in the role of Hamlet, his presence carried additional meaning and was a sign of the ideologies he was publicly circulating. One correspondent said, ‘Seeing him to-night, I was reminded of his speech at the dinner given in his honour by the O. P. Club at the Cecil’, and continued to relay the relationship of Forbes-Robertson to Irving and Terry, which is a crude illustration of how the earlier event impacted the later.¹³⁵ Although the performance was generally considered a sensation, it was not without its criticisms. Several reviewers were unimpressed with the undistinguished cast list but one argued that the cast members would ‘do, seeing that it is Mr Forbes Robertson alone who matters’.¹³⁶ The draw of the event was therefore Forbes-Robertson the celebrity. The correspondent for the *Western Daily Press* said it ‘was a wise thing to open the season [...] with Shakespeare’s sublime tragedy [...]. For it is as Hamlet that Mr Forbes Robertson will live in the memory of many theatregoers’.¹³⁷ Reports of the performance illustrate that the subjectivities of the actor and character were somewhat interchangeable.

His editing of the script and delivery of certain soliloquies and lines with unique mannerisms, and his behaviour on stage (such as the chivalry Hamlet displays to all members of his court and his treatment of Ophelia), prompted a suffragist reviewer to regard Forbes-Robertson’s Hamlet as a ‘reformer’:

For Hamlet, as he is rendered at Drury Lane, is neither mad nor weak, neither callous nor irresolute. He has the fine, intellectual, imaginative nature of the dreamer, and he is racked with the thought of another’s wrong. Because he happens to have been born when the time is out of joint, his becomes the responsibility of having to set it right. [...] Being a dreamer, he shoulders it while he curses at his fate. He is the rare person who believes instinctively as soon as one rises from the dead to convince him of the truth. He embraces a cause at the first bidding of the spirit; he is tormented by it until he dies for it. He is, in fact, the

¹³⁵ ‘Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Farewell’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 24 March 1913, p. 4.

¹³⁶ ‘Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Farewell Season’, *The Scotsman*, 24 March 1913, p. 9.

¹³⁷ ‘Mr Forbes Robertson at “The Lane”’, *Western Daily Press*, 24 March 1913, p. 5.

reformer as he really is, and not as he is painted by his contemporaries and sometimes by the historian. But the average actor who plays Hamlet sees him as the reactionary always sees the pioneer of his time; and Hamlet becomes in his hands mad, weak, irresolute, and callous. The reason that he is none of these things when played by Mr. Forbes-Robertson lies, I think, in the fact that for once he is being presented by a man who is himself a reformer, who knows what it means to have embraced a cause.¹³⁸

According to E.S., had Hamlet been alive at the time of the fight for votes for women, he too would have fought by the suffragists' side. A photograph of a pensive Forbes-Robertson in the guise of Hamlet staring into the distance accompanies the text (Figure 3.27). Lizzie Caswell Smith (1870-1958) took the photograph when he initially took on the role in 1897. Smith was a studio photographer who specialised in theatre and society personalities but, because of her affiliation with the suffrage movement, high-ranking activists of women's suffrage, such as Millicent Fawcett (1847-1929) and Christabel Pankhurst (1880-1958), engaged her to photograph them.¹³⁹ This was also the photograph that the Forbes-Robertson management chose to appear in the programme for *Hamlet* despite a plethora of alternative options, demonstrating that many subtle cultural references were at play in creating a Hamlet that was sympathetic to female suffrage.

¹³⁸ E.S., "Hamlet the Reformer": Mr. Forbes-Robertson in his Greatest Part', *Votes for Women*, 4 April 1913, p. 381.

¹³⁹ Crawford, 2001, p. 549.



Fig 3.27: Forbes-Robertson as Hamlet, photograph by Lizzie Caswall Smith (1913).¹⁴⁰

Buchanan argues that the *Hamlet* film and premier offered codes of prestige as it was marketed on the pedigree and distinction of Forbes-Robertson as a gentleman.¹⁴¹ However, in Ailsa Grant Ferguson's exploration of the article by E.S. in relation to the release of the film *Hamlet*, she illustrates how Shakespeare plays were used as cultural capital that could be appropriated for specific purposes. She counters Buchanan's argument that the film was a celebration of prestige and argues that it 'was a code for resistance, for the imperative to take up the mantle of a 'cause,' even if it felt against your very nature'.¹⁴² However, it is possible that he portrayed both images simultaneously. There is a dichotomy at play in the performances of Forbes-Robertson as he represents both the traditional narratives of masculine behaviour (as a gentleman, indicated by his dress and decorum) and the revolutionary (the suffragist). He appealed to both women and men of all classes to alter their attitudes and argued that this

¹⁴⁰ E.S., "Hamlet the Reformer": [...] p. 381.

¹⁴¹ (2009), pp. 152-155.

¹⁴² *Shakespeare, Cinema, Counter-Culture: Appropriation and Inversion* (New York and Oxon: Routledge, 2016), p. 88.

campaign was the ‘greatest revolution of the age’.¹⁴³ His interpretation of masculinity appeared as a model to other men and had a suffrage purpose – a revolution required ideological apparatuses to illustrate how emancipated women could live, but it also needed models of masculine behaviour for the new society.

With regards to late-twentieth/early-twenty-first century culture, Marshall argues that celebrities ‘are the proxies of change. Celebrities, then, often define the construction of change and transformation in contemporary culture, the very instability of social categories and hierarchies in contemporary culture’.¹⁴⁴ The case of Forbes-Robertson as a spokesperson for women’s suffrage demonstrates that, in the early twentieth century, his celebrity was also used as a proxy for change. As a professional and educated man he demonstrated characteristics associated with achievement, while his unassuming demeanour made him likeable. His leisure pursuits, such as fencing and golf, contributed to the image of a physically active and cultivated man. Male listeners could take comfort from Forbes-Robertson’s persona, which demonstrated that they could support women’s suffrage and still maintain their traditional masculinity. The cultural heritage of Hamlet and Shakespeare combined with the gentlemanly and distinguished persona of Forbes-Robertson offer an unfrontational revolution for the suffrage issue where both modernity and tradition can co-exist peacefully.

Activism on behalf of women’s suffrage gained momentum in the 1910s. However, when the UK entered the First World War on 4 August 1914 suffrage organisations suspended activities in order to concentrate on contributing to the nation’s war effort. On 10 August, prisons released men and women imprisoned for their militant suffrage activities upon the understanding that, under war conditions, there would be no further militancy from the societies. In a circular letter to members of the WSPU on 13 August, Emmeline Pankhurst wrote that ‘[u]nder all circumstances it has been decided to economise the Union’s energies and financial resources by a temporary suspension of activities’, and continued to express her desire for victory for Great Britain.¹⁴⁵ Similarly, Fawcett said, ‘Women, your country needs you. [...] Let us show ourselves worthy of citizenship, whether our claim be recognised or not’.¹⁴⁶ The AFL and the Forbes-

¹⁴³ ‘The Actresses’ Suffrage League’, *The Stage*, 24 December 1908, p. 17.

¹⁴⁴ p. 244.

¹⁴⁵ Crawford, p. 755.

¹⁴⁶ Kelly, p. 129.

Robertsons followed suit and turned to charitable war work, but throughout their activist work there were undertones of a feminist agenda.

3.5 The AFL and Charitable Fundraising During the War

The Forbes-Robertsons were not unique in turning to charitable work during the First World War. Approximately 18,000 new charities were created between 1914 and 1918, raising between £100 million and £150 million (equivalent to £4.785 billion to £7.177 billion in 2018) for various causes.¹⁴⁷ At the beginning of the War a Victorian view of charity lingered, which attributed those in need of charity with weak moral character. By the end of 1918 there was a greater emphasis on addressing the social situations that created these needs.¹⁴⁸ Charitable fundraising and voluntary work was an aspect of the war that women could and did become involved with. Many organisations had a male figurehead or committee members, but it was women who were in charge of daily operations.¹⁴⁹ However, the AFL initiated its own committees and funds that were entirely female-run.

Hindson establishes that, by the end of the nineteenth century, actresses were effectively ambassadors for charitable causes and were adept at organising large-scale public events for social causes. As an integrated group of women experienced in public speaking and arranging fundraisers, the AFL were able to turn to war work swiftly. The AFL continued their suffrage activism while also contributing to war needs. ‘Fighting on several fronts at once,’ Kelly observes, ‘the AFL behaved during war as it had learned to behave during peace, by assuming multiple political positions simultaneously’.¹⁵⁰ Elliott belonged to various committees, but her AFL followers continued to work alongside her, albeit under a different committee name.

Just two weeks after the UK declared the War, four committee members of the AFL – Ashwell, Decima Moore (1871-1964), Eva Moore (1868-1955), and Eve Haverfield (1867-1920)

¹⁴⁷ Peter Grant, *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War: Mobilizing Charity* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2014), pp. 3-6.

¹⁴⁸ Grant, p. 18, and Marilyn D. Button and Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen, ‘Introduction: Injurious Charity’, in *Victorians and the Case for Charity: Essays on Responses to English Poverty by the State, the Church and the Literati*, ed. by Marilyn D. Button and Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland, 2014), pp. 5-20, p. 9.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

¹⁵⁰ p. 131.

– formed the Women’s Emergency Corps (WEC) with the aim of compiling a list of women who were available for war work and their skills. By 4 September 1914, 10,000 women had registered for work.¹⁵¹ Additionally, the WEC was directed to the administration of the *Era*’s ‘War Distress Fund’ to provide immediate assistance to members of the theatrical profession who were unemployed as a result of the War. One solution for this, which resulted in multiple benefits, was to employ theatre personnel to provide entertainments for soldiers at the front and on leave.¹⁵² Kelly’s discussion of the AFL during the war focuses on the entertainment and concerts provided by the ‘Women’s Theatre Camps Entertainments’ – the war-time title of the Play Department of the AFL from November 1914. By October 1916, they had organised over 634 concerts at hospitals and soldiers’ clubs, with many of their plays encouraging feminist themes and tropes.¹⁵³

3.5.1 Fundraising for the British Women’s Hospital

The AFL then turned to a plan to build a British Women’s Hospital (BWH) in France that would be funded and operated entirely by women, but the War Office refused this request.¹⁵⁴ In the meantime, a physician turned philanthropist, Sir Frederick Treves (1853-1923),¹⁵⁵ identified the need for a nursing home for the soldiers rendered permanently disabled by war. In 1915 he purchased the Star and Garter building in Richmond, once a grand hotel, to be used as a nursing home. Treves approached the AFL about collaborating to raise funds for necessary renovations, equipping, and staffing the home. In August 1915, the AFL formed a BWH committee of actresses and titled ladies.¹⁵⁶ As the President of the Advisory Committee, Elliott was the public face of the cause, using, in this capacity, her full title of ‘Lady Forbes-Robertson’ rather than the stage name she normally used in public. One newspaper suggested,

¹⁵¹ Leask (2012), p. 157.

¹⁵² *The Stage Year Book* (London: Carson & Comerford, 1916) in *Internet Archive* https://archive.org/stream/stageyearbook1916londonoft/stageyearbook1916londonoft_djvu.txt.

¹⁵³ p. 129.

¹⁵⁴ The public were told that the reason for the cessation of fund-raising for the French hospital was that it was ‘not urgently required’, (‘For the Star and Garter Home’, *New York Times*, 9 November, 1915).

¹⁵⁵ Treves had been a field surgeon in the Boer War (1899-1902), was personal physician to King Edward VII, and founder of the British Red Cross (Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001), p. 132).

¹⁵⁶ May Whitty became chairwoman, Annie, Viscountess Cowdray was treasurer, and they were able to secure Queen Mary as patroness (Cohen, p. 135).

No doubt ample support will be forthcoming to the appeal which Lady Forbes-Robertson is making on behalf of the Actresses' League in connection with the formation of a British Women's Hospital. Lady Forbes-Robertson has already enlisted the co-operation of some prominent society ladies.¹⁵⁷

Within 11 months they raised £150,000, and £225,000 within a year and a half for the Star and Garter Fund (equivalent to £9.99 million and £12.38 million in 2018 respectively) through charity theatricals and concerts.¹⁵⁸

On 25 September 1915 the BWH organised a Poster Parade through London to raise awareness of the cause. It followed the parade with its first public meeting on 1 October and published appeals for donations in newspapers. In January 1916, Elliott launched her 'Women for Men' appeal, calling for women to raise £50,000 (equivalent to £3.33 million in 2018) to build the Star and Garter home for young men who were injured for life. She appealed to women to support this particular cause because 'this is the only one to be raised by women alone for men'.¹⁵⁹ Over the following months, the BWH drew on its strengths and used social connections to organise concerts and meetings at the Alhambra, Palace, and Palladium Theatres. During the week beginning 6 March, Elliott appeared at the Victoria Palace Music Hall, not as an actress but as a singer, on behalf of the BWH.¹⁶⁰ On the 24 and 25 March, the BWH organised a Lady Day at the home of Lady Cowdray (Annie Pearson, 1860-1932).¹⁶¹

During these early months of the BWH activity, Forbes-Robertson was on his third and final US tour. Elliott did not return with Forbes-Robertson for his second and third tours of the US. At the outbreak of war, Forbes-Robertson had completed his first farewell tour of the American continent and was preparing for his return on 28 September 1914 for the second tour. Ultimately, this became the second of three farewell tours. He eventually played *Hamlet* for the final time at the Sanders Theater at Harvard University on 26 April 1916 and sailed for Britain on 29 April, arriving back in London on 9 May. In spring 1916, there was no end in sight for any of the nations involved in the War. The Germans attacked Verdun on 21 February and were making significant advances; by the end of March 89,000 French soldiers had been killed there. In

¹⁵⁷ 'British Women's Hospital', *Western Mail*, 28 August 1915, p. 4.

¹⁵⁸ Cohen, pp. 132-136.

¹⁵⁹ 'Lady Forbes-Robertson's "Women for Men" Appeal', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 3 January 1916, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰ 'Making her First "Hall" Mark', *Tatler*, 13 March 1916, p. 11.

¹⁶¹ 'County Notes', *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 31 March 1916, p. 4.

Mesopotamia, on 7 March the British tried to break through to besieged soldiers at Kut, but the attack failed leaving 3,500 dead or wounded. Later that month on 22 March, the British were able to destroy a German submarine using their new weapon (a depth charge) but the German Navy maintained a more successful record of naval sinkings. During April, German raids on British towns including Sunderland, Leith, Edinburgh, and East London resulted in civilian casualties. As Forbes-Robertson sailed to Britain, the Germans were launching their third gas attack in four days against the British on the Western Front.¹⁶² After his departure an article in the *New York Tribune* read:

Sir Johnston said that he would not appear here again professionally. ‘I am going back and make [*sic*] myself useful until the war is over,’ he said, ‘and then I hope to return here with my children for a visit. [...] The idea of keeping one’s word is old-fashioned now that the Huns are with us, but I shall keep mine.’¹⁶³

Forbes-Robertson not only kept his promise to return to the US, but also kept his promise to make himself useful to the war effort: upon his return to Britain he joined his wife in the ventures of the BWH.

On 9 June 1916 celebrities of the theatre demonstrated the value of entertainment during war in the Barrie Charity Matinee at the Coliseum Theatre for the benefit of the Star and Garter Fund. J. M. Barrie’s (1860-1937) short plays were ideal to play as part of a variety act at charity matinees.¹⁶⁴ What rendered this matinee exceptional was the all-star cast; one reviewer described the cast as a ‘perfect milky way’ of stars.¹⁶⁵ On 7 June, *The Era* newspaper offered a glimpse of the ensemble of celebrities that the public could see at the event (Fig 3.28). The array of celebrities was a major draw for theatregoers and the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* reported that

¹⁶² Martin Gilbert, *The First World War: A Complete History* (New York: Henry Holt, 1994), pp. 231-240.

¹⁶³ ‘3 Stage Stars Sail for Europe’, *New York Tribune*, 30 April 1916, p. 2.

¹⁶⁴ Jenna L. Kudly, ‘J. M. Barrie and World War I’, in *Humor, Entertainment, and Popular Culture During World War I*, ed. by C. Tholas-Disset and others, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 197-208, p. 198.

¹⁶⁵ ‘The Theatre and the War’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 10 June 1916, p. 6. The other members of the cast and participants included: Lillah McCarthy, Arthur Bouchier, Lady Tree, Irene Vanbrugh, Ethel Levey, Alexander, Henry Ainley, Charley Hawtrey, du Maurier, Ellen Terry, Gladys Cooper, Lily Elsie, Ellis Jeffreys, Hilda Trevelyan, Vesta Tilley, Owen Nares, Eric Lewis, George Grossmith, Leon Quartermaine, Leslie Henson, Madge Titheradge, Gina Palerme, Miss Compton, Lady Wyndham, Dennis Eadie, Clare Greet, Dorothy Minto, Edmund Gwenn, Pollie Emery, Nelson Keys, Basil Gill, Fisher White, Arthur Wonter, Holman Clark, Ben Webster, Dawson Milward, Mlle. Doziat, Shaw, G. K. Chesterton, Archer, and Lord Howard de Walden.

the application for seats was ‘quite unprecedented. This theatre has never experienced such a rush’.¹⁶⁶ On the day of the event crowds gathered to see the celebrities arrive but were disappointed by the absence of the Queen; as patroness of the Star and Garter fund, the performance was by Royal Command and her attendance had been another marketing attraction. However, after Lord Kitchener’s (1850-1916) death on 5 June it was decided that it would be inappropriate for her to attend.¹⁶⁷



Fig 3.28: A photograph of the cast of the Barrie Charity Matinee, printed in *The Era* (June 1916).¹⁶⁸

The matinee opened with the National Anthem and the Coliseum band played a march – tropes of solidarity and patriotism that had become common throughout the war.¹⁶⁹ This benefit matinee included *The Admirable Crichton*, Barrie’s 1902 comedy addressing the class and social

¹⁶⁶ ‘Big Actors for Barrie’, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 18 May 1916, p. 5.

¹⁶⁷ ‘Star and Garter Matinee’, *Globe*, 9 June 1916, p. 1.

¹⁶⁸ *The Era*, 7 June 16, p. 9.

¹⁶⁹ L. J. Collins, *Theatre at War, 1914-1918* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 7.

inequalities of early Edwardian life, which was then followed by a pantomime titled ‘Miss Irene Vanbrugh’s Pantomime’. A newspaper quoted the programme’s synopsis of the first scene, ‘What Will Women Do?’:

An exposure of the nefarious means by which the Ladies’ Committee secured eminent actors for small parts on this occasion. How Mr. Henry Ainley [1879-1945] went for a quiet walk and how Miss Violet Lorraine [1886-1956] brought him back. [...] How Mr. Charles Hawtrey [1858-1923] was determined not to appear, and how Miss Ethel Levey [1880-1955] was determined that he should. To what length will a woman go to achieve her ends?¹⁷⁰

A sketch followed on ‘When the War Will End’ by Irene Vanbrugh, and then a film titled ‘How Men Love’ featuring Shaw, G. K. Chesterton (1874-1936), Archer, and Lord Howard de Walden (1880-1946) as cowboys fighting for the love of Campbell. Finally, Forbes-Robertson and Elliott came on stage and Elliott delivered an emotional recollection of kissing a wounded Sergeant Major in a hospital who thought she was his mother. Forbes-Robertson then announced that between booking fees, donations from performers, money on the doors, and sales from programmes, the event had raised approximately £7,000 for the fund (approximately £466,200 in 2018).¹⁷¹ The house was full and audience members included titled ladies and gentlemen, the French and Russian ambassadors, many wounded soldiers, and a notable number of ‘middle-aged ladies and mothers with officer sons’.¹⁷²

The event was a demonstration of the meticulous stage management of various real and fictional personalities to create a spectacle both on stage and extra-theatrically. *The Era* described the society ladies selling programmes: ‘Pretty ladies, with hereditary and popular titles, in the prettiest of frocks and millinery, and distributing smiles and gracious words gratis, sold programmes and souvenirs’.¹⁷³ The society gossip column of *Tatler* revealed that, ahead of the matinee, there had been ‘some heart-burning [...] ‘bout who’s selling progs. [...Mrs Bonham-Carter] wants only pretty girls to do the job – well, no one’ll like being left out, of course’.¹⁷⁴

¹⁷⁰ ‘A Barrie Afternoon’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 June 1916, p2.

¹⁷¹ Actress Lily Elsie donated over £1,000 from her recent London performances, Maxine Elliott passed on £500 from two anonymous American admirers, and Forbes-Robertson contributed the £525 proceeds from his three performances of *Hamlet* at Harvard (‘The Theatre and the War’, *Birmingham Daily Post*, 10 June 1916, p. 6, and ‘The “Barrie” Charity Matinee at the Coliseum’, *Era*, 14 June 1916, p. 9).

¹⁷² ‘Family Parties’, *Daily Mirror*, 10 June 1916, p. 10.

¹⁷³ ‘The “Barrie” Charity Matinee at the Coliseum’, *Era*, 14 June 1916, p. 9.

¹⁷⁴ ‘The Letters of Eve’, *Tatler*, 31 May 1916, p. 4.

Those making the cut included Lady Margot Asquith (wife of Herbert Asquith, Prime Minister of the UK from 1908 to 1916, 1864-1945) and Marion Terry. The wounded soldiers in the audience were a familiar sight at charity entertainments and served as a visual reminder of the cause as emblems of pity and admiration. In the first drama, the actors played fictional character parts, but the fourth wall was broken in order to present Ellen Terry with a bouquet of flowers in acknowledgement of her being the ‘Queen of the Stage’. In the ‘What Will Women Do?’ scene of the pantomime the actors played caricatured versions of themselves, while Forbes-Robertson and Elliott’s ‘out of costume’ entry at the end functioned to offer the audience a personal plea from private individuals. One report said that, in response to Elliott’s story of kissing the wounded man, ‘every man in the audience wished he had been that wounded Sergeant-Major, and every woman wished she had had the chance’.¹⁷⁵ The event had the opportunity to further the suffrage message of the BWH – the ‘What Will Women Do?’ scene reflexively acknowledged the importance of women, in particular the actresses, to the war funds.

Owing to his late return to Britain, Forbes-Robertson’s role in the June 1916 Barrie matinee was relatively marginal, but his participation in such charitable events became a frequent occurrence for the remainder of the War despite officially being in retirement. By the end of 1916 Forbes-Robertson and his celebrity brand became instrumental for the BWH when it began to fundraise for another cause that, again, furthered their drive to assist the war effort whilst also demonstrating the capabilities of women – the Scottish Women’s Hospitals (SWH).

3.5.2 Fundraising for Scottish Women’s Hospitals

Forbes-Robertson’s involvement with the SWH is particularly revealing of his philanthropic and political persuasions because of the underlying goals of the cause. The SWH had two aims; the first was to provide medical assistance in the war effort, and the second was ‘to promote the cause of women’s rights and by their involvement in the war, help win those rights’.¹⁷⁶ The founder of the SWH was Dr. Elsie Maud Inglis (1864-1917), a family doctor and surgeon who, at the outbreak of the War, was practising in Edinburgh despite the social and educational barriers to women working in medicine. She had worked at the New Hospital in London where she

¹⁷⁵ ‘The “Barrie” Charity Matinee at the Coliseum’, *Era*, 14 June 1916, p. 9

¹⁷⁶ Alan Cumming, ‘Scottish Women’s Hospitals’, 2013, in <http://scottishwomenshospitals.co.uk>, [accessed 17 July 2017]

became heavily involved in women's suffrage campaigns. By 1909, Inglis was serving as President of the Edinburgh National Society for Women's Suffrage and was Honorary Secretary of the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies, making public speeches across Scotland to draw in supporters from some of the remoter areas of the country.¹⁷⁷ Upon the outbreak of war she volunteered her services to the Royal Army Medical Corps who, allegedly, told her to 'go home and sit still'.¹⁷⁸ In spite of this rebuttal she offered her services to the Allied and Serbian forces who accepted her assistance, which led to the conception of SWH. The SWH doctors and nurses were all female and they set up hospitals close to the fields of fighting to treat injured soldiers quickly. The hospitals operated with such efficiency that, by December 1915, reporters and speakers at public meetings retold stories of their successful missions and declared them heroes. The SWH established and operated hospital units in the war zones of France, Macedonia, Greece, Corsica, Romania, and Russia, but they were most highly regarded for their work in Serbia. By 1917 the War Office was actively encouraging the recruitment of women for medical services.¹⁷⁹ The SWH was therefore a prominent demonstration of female power and might.

Inglis was wealthy and therefore able to initiate the project with some of her private money, but, as the demand for their services became greater as the war continued, it was necessary to raise funds. At the inception of the project, Inglis anticipated needing £50,000 (equivalent to £4,713,000 in 2018) and held a mass meeting at Kingsway Hall, London on 20 October 1914 where she delivered a speech entitled 'What women can do to help the war'. By 1918, SWH had received £450,000 (equivalent to £21.53 million in 2018) through private donations and fundraising events.¹⁸⁰ For such a high-profile cause it was important to create an effective brand image, which included having the public support of influential celebrities. Forbes-Robertson's prominent social position, combined with the characteristics of gentlemanliness, beauty, and professionalism associated with his public image, his powerful speaking voice, and stage

¹⁷⁷ The Edinburgh National Society for Women's Suffrage formed in 1867 and in 1918 became the National Society for Equal Citizenship while the Scottish Federation of Women's Suffrage Societies formed in 1909 (William W. J. Knox, *Lives of Scottish Women: Women and Scottish Society, 1800-1980* (Edinburgh: UP, 2006), p. 46).

¹⁷⁸ M. Lawrence, *Shadow of Swords: a Biography of Elsie Inglis* (London: Michael Joseph, 1971), p. 34.

¹⁷⁹ Alan Cumming, 'Scottish Women's Hospitals', 2013, in <http://scottishwomenshospitals.co.uk>, [accessed 17 July 2017]

¹⁸⁰ Lawrence, p. 102.

presence developed over a forty-year career on the stage, meant that he was an ideal public face for the SWH. Additionally, and crucially, as an ardent supporter of women's suffrage his presence was already loaded with political meaning.

On 11 December 1916 *The Times* reprinted a letter sent from Sybil de Vere Brassey (Chairman of the London Units of the SWH, 1858-1934) to May Whitty (1865-1948) thanking the BWH for their offer to raise £50,000 for SWH.¹⁸¹ Forbes-Robertson attended a SWH meeting on 8 December 1916 presided by Lady Frances Balfour (1858-1931), an aristocratic woman who had been involved in women's suffrage since the 1880s and, from 1904 until 1914, was President of the Central Society for Women's Suffrage. Balfour argued that the women of the SWH had successfully demonstrated their capabilities and efficiency, and that the Allied Governments ought to recognise their efforts. Mr. E. P. Stepping assisted Balfour in testifying to the valuable work of the SWH. Having recently returned from the Serbian front, he described the difficulties they faced there due to the severe weather and explained that the hospital run by the SWH was the only operational hospital along that front.¹⁸² Four days later a public meeting and fundraiser was held at the Palace Theatre with Forbes-Robertson presiding. Advertisements for the event highlighted his presence as his popular name served to attract the public's attention. Clara Butt (1872-1936) sang the National Anthem and speakers – including Balfour, philanthropist and author William Pett Ridge (1859-1930), and Labour politician Ben Tillett (1860-1943) – made speeches. The event raised £1000 (equivalent to £66,600 in 2018) for SWH.¹⁸³

On Friday 23 March 1917, Forbes-Robertson and Elliott appeared in their original roles in a matinee performance of *Passing* at the Coliseum with the proceeds benefiting the SWH fund. According to *The Globe*, *Passing* had been specially chosen for the Queen (who was a patron of the fund and was to attend with other members of the Royal family) and the organisers hoped to break the record of previous Coliseum matinees for war funds.¹⁸⁴ The event was primarily a fundraiser, but newspapers publicised it as an occasion for high society and an exclusive

¹⁸¹ 'Hospital Nurses', *Times*, 11 December 1916, p. 1.

¹⁸² 'Scottish Women's Hospitals', *Scotsman*, 9 December 1916, p. 6, and 'Valuable Work Has Been Accomplished', *Dundee Courier*, 13 December 1916, p. 2.

¹⁸³ '£1000 Collected at London Meeting', *Dundee Courier*, 13 December 1916, p. 2, and *Pall Mall Gazette*, 8 December 1916, p. 6.

¹⁸⁴ 'A Royal Matinee. Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson's Return To The Stage', *Globe*, 5 March 1917, p. 3.

opportunity to see Forbes-Robertson perform. The headline announcing the event in *The Globe* stated, ‘A Royal Matinee. Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson’s Return To The Stage’.¹⁸⁵ Meanwhile, the *Pall Mall Gazette* emphasised that

Sir J. Forbes-Robertson wishes it to be clearly understood that his appearance is in no sense a return to the stage, but merely a single performance for war work – so that this matinee promises a really unique opportunity for the public to see this famous actor in his favourite part, to say nothing of the really ‘star’ cast.¹⁸⁶

It suggested that it was a great feat to induce Forbes-Robertson from his retirement and branded the event as a limited-edition product while his ‘all-star cast’ was another marketing incentive used to draw an audience.

Annie Cowdray – treasurer of the London Committee of the SWH amongst involvement with numerous other committees – organised the charity performance.¹⁸⁷ Her husband, Weetman Dickinson Pearson, was a building contractor and oil magnate who became a baronet in 1894, became Liberal MP for Colchester in 1895, and was appointed to a peerage in 1910.¹⁸⁸ Therefore, like Forbes-Robertson, she was a social class climber and conscious of hosting an event to rival the myriad philanthropic events taking place in London during the war. As it happened, the Queen was absent due to the death of the Duchess of Connaught (1860-1917), but despite this, the *Daily Mirror* observed ‘a crowded and remarkably representative audience’ and listed some of the ‘fashionable people’ in attendance, and *ABJ* commented on the ‘distinguished audience’.¹⁸⁹ After the performance there was also an auctioning of a portrait of Forbes-Robertson dressed as the Stranger painted by Ambrose McEvoy (1877-1929, Fig 3.29), bought by Cowdray for 500 guineas (equivalent to £28,900 in 2018) and, in total, the event raised £2,700 (roughly equivalent to £148,600 in 2018). This high-profile event relied upon the cultural transfer of the celebrities’ brands to the ‘fashionable’ audience members. The respectability and nobility of Forbes-Robertson and the Queen transferred to the philanthropic and political plight of the SWH through their endorsement.

¹⁸⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁶ ‘A Welcome Return’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 February 1917, p. 8.

¹⁸⁷ According to Crawford, Lady Cowdray was involved with: Women’s Liberal Federation, Women’s Social and Political Union, National Political League, Northern Men’s Federation for Women’s Suffrage, South London Hospital for Women, and London Society for Women’s Service (p. 145.)

¹⁸⁸ Crawford, p. 145.

¹⁸⁹ ‘The Coliseum Matinee’, *Daily Mirror*, 24 March 1917, p. 10; ‘Lady Cowdray’s Achievement’, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 24 March 1917, p. 3.



Fig 3.29: Forbes-Robertson as the Stranger by Ambrose McEvoy (1919).¹⁹⁰

It is impossible to determine the exact value that Forbes-Robertson's presence brought to the event – without the Queen the event was still able to take place, whereas it is unlikely that it could have continued without Forbes-Robertson (although it is not clear if he had an understudy.) However, this performance was not to be an exclusive one-time opportunity (as originally advertised), as two weeks later the press announced that Forbes-Robertson would give a special three-week season at the Playhouse Theatre from 9 April to 30 April 1917, performing each evening and Thursday and Saturday matinees, in aid of the SWH funds. As highlighted in the advertisement in *The Times* (Fig 3.30), all the actors in the cast performed for free, Frank Curzon and Gladys Cooper loaned the Playhouse free of charge, and Jerome did not take his author fees.¹⁹¹ The BWH committee responsible for organising the revival reported that they raised £10,000 (equivalent to £550,400 in 2018) from the season (although this did include additional

¹⁹⁰ *Johnston Forbes-Robertson*, 1919, oil paint on canvas, 77 × 63.5cm, Christie's South Kensington, <http://garrick.ssl.co.uk/object-g1116> [accessed 21 April 2019].

¹⁹¹ 'To Help the Helpless; by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson', *Graphic*, 7 April 1917, p. 412.

donations made by individuals and not just ticket sales.)¹⁹² On 8 May 1917, the BWH committee suggested that future profits from the performances of this play should go to other charities.¹⁹³ Therefore, the SWH's reliance on Forbes-Robertson's brand to draw a crowd and funds was a successful manoeuvre.



Fig 3.30: Advertisement in *The Times* for Forbes-Robertson's run of *Passing* for SWH (1917).¹⁹⁴

One newspaper reported that the reception after his performance must have dispelled any doubts Forbes-Robertson could have had regarding the audience's affection for him: 'It was a remarkable ovation that visibly touched an actor who once again endowed a famous part with the grace and magic of a famous personality'.¹⁹⁵ This suggests that the combination of the public person of Forbes-Robertson with the particularly famous role of the Stranger was a main pull of

¹⁹² '£10,000 for Scottish Women's Hospitals', *Western Daily Press*, 12 June 1917, p. 3.

¹⁹³ 'New Play To-Morrow', *Times*, 8 May 1917, p. 9.

¹⁹⁴ 'Multiple Display Advertisements', *Times*, 9 April 1917, p. 9.

¹⁹⁵ 'The Coliseum Matinee', *Daily Mirror*, 24 March 1917, p. 10.

the event. Despite his large repertoire of plays, which included Shakespeare plays and modern dramas, Forbes-Robertson chose to perform *Passing*. In addition to being less physically draining than *Hamlet*, for example, *Passing*'s moral message and invocation of a type of Christianity based on compassion, charity, and philanthropy had a cultural significance that transferred to the audience through their donations.

One review argued that the 'message of the Stranger has never been more needed than at the present time',¹⁹⁶ while another claimed, 'Anything more dignified and beautiful than Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson's Stranger would be hard to conceive'.¹⁹⁷ In a promotional article for the season, Forbes-Robertson explained that

'The Stranger' brings peace, healing and calm in his wake, and the hospitals for which we are striving carry the same message of healing and gentle ministrations to men racked by fever and wounds. [...] To us, so far from shell and shock of actual battle, they turn for help. Help us- and you will be helping them. For myself, I consider it an honour that I am able to do even such a little thing for those who have done so much.¹⁹⁸

Forbes-Robertson invokes a deliberate blurring of Jerome's fictional world and the fictitious role of the Stranger with the veridical world of war and injury. So effective was this play and Forbes-Robertson as a vehicle for generating philanthropic donations that *The Globe* reported that 'no play has earned so much for charity as "The Passing of the Third Floor Back" has earned'.¹⁹⁹ Forbes-Robertson's enactment of the Stranger represented the tropes of goodness, saintliness, generosity, and Christianity. This persona and iconography, here loaned to the SWH, was purposed to transport these qualities to his public.

3.6 Entertaining Troops

Forbes-Robertson's stage performances and appearances at matinee events were evidently effective fundraisers. Although his revivals of *Passing* on behalf of the BWH for SWH likely constituted his greatest contribution to wartime fundraising (in addition to the 1917 revivals he also took the play to Derby and Manchester in April 1918), he also participated in performances

¹⁹⁶ 'Theatre and Musichall Gossip', *People*, 27 May 1917, p. 4

¹⁹⁷ 'The Passing of the Third Floor Back', *Tatler*, 25 April 1917, p. 106.

¹⁹⁸ 'To Help the Helpless; by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson', *Graphic*, 7 April 1917, p. 412.

¹⁹⁹ 'In Stagedland', *Globe*, 13 June 1917, p. 6.

for numerous other funds and charities.²⁰⁰ However, the war work of celebrities extended beyond raising money. Members of the theatrical profession recognised early in the war that soldiers needed entertainment. The YMCA provided recreational tents at British training centres with song sheets so that men could create their own entertainment. As casualty lists grew there came a greater emphasis on providing concert room entertainments in hospitals.²⁰¹ According to the estimates in *The Era*, in the first ten months of the war, approximately 1,000 of the more than 9,000 men on stage enlisted in the army.²⁰² Actors were not recognised as providing valuable work and so were subject to conscription after its introduction in 1916; the stage lost many men to the battlefields. Thus, entertaining soldiers was left to the actresses and the AFL turned to offering entertainments (with the consent of the Army Council).²⁰³ Initially these concerts took place in training camps within Britain, but Ashwell, as documented by Leask, overcame numerous obstacles in order to provide dramatic entertainments on the front lines of battle for British soldiers fighting in Belgium and France.²⁰⁴ Ashwell's scheme had the additional benefit of providing work to unemployed performers.

3.6.1. *The Shakespeare Hut*

From 1916, ANZAC soldiers on leave in London could find a temporary home at the Shakespeare Hut in Bloomsbury with its varied weekly programmes of entertainment. Ailsa Grant Ferguson has explored the function and operation of the Shakespeare Hut and explored the ideological inferences in the performances that took place and stars that performed there.²⁰⁵ The

²⁰⁰ Other causes for which he appeared on stage included: Belgian Refugees Fund, Canadian Patriotic Fund, Three Arts Women's Employment Fund, St. Dunstan's Hostel for Blind Soldiers, Red Cross, Nation's Fund for Nurses (this was also a beneficiary fund of the BWH), Royal National Lifeboat Institution, Countess Lytton's Hospital, Lady Smith-Dorrien's Hospital Bag Fund matinee, and Belgian Red Cross.

²⁰¹ Victor Emaljanow, 'Palliative Pantomimes: Entertainments in Prisoner-of-War Camps', in *British Theatre and the Great War, 1914-1918. New Perspectives*, ed. by Andrew Maunder (New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), e-book, pp. 251- 268, p. 270-271.

²⁰² 'Patriotism and the Actor', *Era*, 30 June 1915, p. 13.

²⁰³ 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 18 November 1914, p. 8.

²⁰⁴ See Ashwell's autobiography and biography: Lena Ashwell, *Modern Troubadours, A Record of the Concerts at the Front* (Florida: Hard Press, 1920 repr. 1922); Leask (2012) and 'Lena Ashwell: Touring Concert Parties and Arts Advocacy, 1914-1919', in (2015 Maunder) pp. 251-268.

²⁰⁵ Ailsa Grant Ferguson, 'Lady Forbes-Robertson's war work: Gertrude Elliott and the Shakespeare Hut performances, 1916-1919', in *Women Making Shakespeare*, ed. by Gordon

site had been intended for the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre (SMNT, discussed in detail in Chapter 4) that was to mark the 1916 Shakespeare Tercentenary, but plans had been delayed so, in March 1916, Israel Gollancz (the SMNT secretary, 1863-1930) suggested that the YMCA could use it as a respite hut for soldiers. The YMCA erected a mock-Tudor building with a purpose-built theatre inside, Elliott was engaged to manage the weekly performances, and the Hut opened on 11 August 1916. At times the Hut accommodated 2,000 soldiers a week and it engaged 350 female volunteers to run the operation.

The Hut served several purposes simultaneously. Ferguson argues that the Hut added legitimacy to the SMNT cause as the commemoration of Shakespeare was aligned with caring for soldiers.²⁰⁶ At the same time, the Hut became a feminised space and Elliott continued her work for the AFL by offering female-led productions. Her social position in theatrical circles meant that she was able to engage major theatre celebrities, which, of course, included her husband. She did not just engage stars of the legitimate theatre or plays promoting feminism, instead selecting a diverse ensemble of performers. For instance, a column in *The Sketch* details how Elliott ‘bagged’ a comedian/imitator and a ventriloquist/conjurer while at a fundraiser tea event at the Savoy, while the *Daily Mirror* told that Forbes-Robertson met a street whistler on his way to the Hut and took him along to the concert, where s/he proved a success.²⁰⁷

There is no clear record of the number of times that Forbes-Robertson performed at the Hut, but it is unlikely that he performed full-length plays. A programme from one gala show advertises that he was to perform a soliloquy from *Hamlet* and Jacques’ ‘Seven Ages’ speech from *As You Like It*, and a newspaper reports that on 9 November 1918 he recited Kipling’s ‘If’,

McMullan and Lena Orlin (London: Bloomsbury, *The Arden Shakespeare*, 2014), pp. 233-242; Ead, ‘Entertaining the Anzacs: Performances for Australian and New Zealand Troops on Leave in London, 1916-1919’, in (2015 Maunder) pp. 234-250; Ead, ‘Performing commemoration in wartime: Shakespeare galas in London, 1916-1919’, in *Celebrating Shakespeare: Commemoration and Cultural Memory*, ed. Clara Calvo and Coppélia Kahn (Cambridge: UP, 2015), pp. 202-224; Ead, “‘When Wasteful War Shall Statues Overturn’: Forgetting the Shakespeare Hut’, *Shakespeare* 10(3), 2014, pp. 276-292 <doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2014.926976> [accessed 10 July 2014].

²⁰⁶ Ferguson, (2015 Maunder), p. 236.

²⁰⁷ ‘To Make Them Forget’, *Sketch*, 28 November 1917, p. 4; ‘Shakespeare’s Hut’, *Daily Mirror*, 7 June 1917, p. 3.

followed by ‘Seven Ages’, and ‘To be or not to be’ as an encore.²⁰⁸ This illustrates that, while the programme on offer was eclectic, Shakespeare maintained a central position in the Hut’s agenda. Pinero had suggested to Gollancz, in a letter dated 30 May 1916, that Elliott should be nominated as the Chairman: ‘She is, there is no need for me to tell you, a clever and energetic woman, and she would have, of course, the help of her husband’.²⁰⁹ Elliott was a star and highly regarded woman in her own right with a proven track record of activism. Her stardom was largely founded on her performances of Shakespeare plays with Forbes-Robertson, and Forbes-Robertson’s star persona was so heavily associated with his Shakespeare roles, in particular Hamlet, that it is unlikely that their engagement at the Hut was incidental.

The Hut, although funded by the YMCA rather than state-funded, came to represent an idea of Englishness to the ANZAC troops through its architecture and its commitment to Shakespeare in its programme. Shakespeare, as a quintessential English icon, was part of the ideological fabric in creating an image of not only an England of culture, but also an England that cared for its soldiers. The Hut functioned as a monument to Shakespeare, which was significant in the Tercentenary year, but it also immortalised a Shakespeare who was representative of all individuals and had the power to soothe. Ferguson depicts the Shakespeare of the Shakespeare Hut as one who was

for the “man on the street”, the conscript and the war hero. As it turned out, he also became Shakespeare the rehabilitator, the comforter of the shell-shocked and morally lost, the protector of the young men being sent into hell in the name of the Empire.²¹⁰

Forbes-Robertson had never performed in Australasia, but he had contemplated touring Australia in winter 1916/1917, which suggests that his reputation was sufficiently well-known there (although he ultimately decided to return to the US).²¹¹ It is likely that Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity was known in Australasia as newspapers frequently reported on the dramatic fare and society gossip of London. Australian newspapers had reported on Forbes-Robertson’s activity since at least 1881 when there were reports of his role as Romeo with Modjeska.²¹² For ANZAC

²⁰⁸ BL/125/25/2/Ellen Terry Archive/ET/D439, in Ferguson, (2014 McMullan), p. 240; ‘Shakespeare Hut Concert’, *Era*, 13 November 1918, p. 6.

²⁰⁹ National Theatre Archive SMNT 2/1/12, in Ferguson, (2014 McMullan), p. 235.

²¹⁰ (2014 ‘When wasteful...’), p. 283.

²¹¹ ‘Real Dramatic Treat’, *El Paso Herald*, 25 November 1915, p. 6; ‘Don’t Care a Cent for Millions’, *Washington Herald*, 11 February 1916, p. 4.

²¹² ‘London Gossip’, *South Australian Register*, 21 May 1881, p. 6.

soldiers, seeing Forbes-Robertson perform scenes of Shakespeare in the Shakespeare Hut probably invoked a sense of a picturesque version of England.

3.6.2 *Distributing the Shakespeare Memorial Book*

In January 1917, Forbes-Robertson gave recitations to blinded soldiers at occasions that appropriated the part of his public persona associated with his Shakespeare roles. The occasions had multiple motives connected with commemorating both the death of Lord Kitchener (Secretary of State for War) and the Shakespeare Tercentenary. Kitchener perished when the *HMS Hampshire* hit a mine near Orkney on 5 June 1916. As there was no body retrieved there was no burial site for a place of mourning so, instead, the Lord Kitchener National Memorial Fund produced the *Lord Kitchener Memorial Book*. Sidney Lee (1859-1926), acclaimed Shakespeare scholar, was also Chairman of the Kitchener Souvenir Committee of the League of the British Empire. He issued copies of Shakespeare's Complete Works, along with the Kitchener book, for distribution to blinded soldiers. Clara Calvo describes the Shakespeare book as a war memorial. A dedication on the inside of a copy of the book in the Imperial War Museum explains that the souvenir was intended as an heirloom that could be passed down through generations.²¹³ Matthew Hendley has attempted to estimate the distribution of the souvenir book in order to appreciate its reception. His research reveals that Lee had intended for all British soldiers permanently disabled in the war to be gifted a copy. Of the 1.6 million injured, approximately 2% of these were permanent injuries, and yet there is only evidence of 5,000 copies being published.²¹⁴

For some, the action of distributing souvenir copies of Shakespeare to blind soldiers is worthy of ridicule and provokes criticism of an elitist agenda. With the soldiers unable to use, i.e. read, the object they were given, the gift seems ill conceived and the item takes on an ornamental role rather than a literary role. Most of the books were distributed privately, but there were also public presentations. On 24 and 26 January 1917, Princess Louise, Duchess of Argyll (1848-1939) presented copies of both books to blind veterans of the war at St. Dunstan's Hostel and the

²¹³ 'Shakespeare as War Memorial: Remembrance and Commemoration in the Great War', in *Shakespeare Survey*, ed. by Peter Holland (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010), pp. 198-211. <doi:10.1017/CCOL9780521769150.017>, p. 203.

²¹⁴ *Organized Patriotism and the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britain, 1914-1932* (McGill-Queen's UP, 2012), p. 105.

Star and Garter Home.²¹⁵ Lee addressed the men and Forbes-Robertson recited soliloquies from Shakespeare. On 25 January, the day between the two events, Lee also spoke at the opening of the Shakespeare Exhibition at the Grafton Galleries that was held for the Red Cross and Order of St John of Jerusalem. He upheld Shakespeare as a patriotic symbol with the ability of ‘alleviating present anxieties and sufferings’.²¹⁶ The invocation of a noble icon of the past was to provide solace in a time of grief. In this sense, the ritual of being given the books as part of an occasion that involved a known celebrity reciting to injured servicemen may have been more impactful than the private distribution of books. As ascertained in the Introduction, celebrity studies of contemporary culture acknowledge the legitimate para-social attachments of fans to celebrities. As Rojek argues, celebrities ‘offer peculiarly powerful affirmation of belonging, recognition and meaning’.²¹⁷ With this contemporary understanding of the power of celebrity, a revised analysis of the events at St. Dunstan’s Hostel and the Star and Garter Home might suggest that Forbes-Robertson performed a valuable function for the listeners. Forbes-Robertson was an individual branded and accepted as the greatest living actor of Shakespeare, and moreover, with a voice that had worldwide acclaim for its beauty, natural timbre, and perfected elocution. While the blinded soldiers were unable to read the books it is possible that listening to Forbes-Robertson’s Shakespearean soliloquies was consoling. Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity presence invoked Shakespeare and ideologies of nationhood and patriotism, but his presence was also a reminder of visual and aural beauty.

3.7 Diplomacy During the War

This section of the chapter explores how Forbes-Robertson’s theatrical celebrity performed a political function during the War. On 5 May 1914 Forbes-Robertson returned to Britain from New York after his first farewell tour of the US. Just a few weeks later on 10 June he presided at an event of the Poetry Society at Hyde Park House that celebrated one hundred years of peace between the US and the UK. Forbes-Robertson addressed the attendees, Henry Newbolt (1862-1938) delivered a talk on ‘Poetry and Peace’, and other representatives recited selections of

²¹⁵ Sir Arthur Pearson founded St. Dunstan’s Hostel in 1914 as a place where blind soldiers and sailors could go to learn how to function while blind, in March 1915 it officially opened in Regent’s Park (‘Arrangements for To-Day’, *The Times*, 25 January 1917, p. 9, and ‘Court Circular’, *The Times*, 27 February 1917, p. 9).

²¹⁶ ‘Shakespeare Stage Exhibition’, *The Times*, 25 January 1917, p. 15.

²¹⁷ p. 52.

American verse.²¹⁸ Anglo-American relations were positive at this stage, but it had not always been so, and, at the outbreak of the War, US support for the Allied campaign was far from inevitable. The cultural association of Forbes-Robertson with Shakespeare and his public persona possessed with beauty, charm, artistic ability, and intellectualism are not necessarily the qualities sought for in an ambassador or a diplomat. Nonetheless, his celebrity image in the US enabled him to function in an unofficial diplomatic capacity. His enhanced public presence meant that when he arrived in New York from the UK, reporters would immediately press him for information from his home country. When he was touring the US during the War, he put the admiration of his fans and his time in the spotlight to use to endear the US public to the Allied political agenda and promote this relationship in public speeches.

US independence from Great Britain was recognised in 1783 after the conclusion of the Revolutionary War (1775-1783). The two nations were at war again in 1812 during the Napoleonic Wars, culminating in the Treaty of Ghent in 1814 with diplomatic relations re-established in 1815. In the 1840s the two nations disagreed over Canadian borders but the issues were resolved peacefully in the 1846 Oregon Treaty. After the American Civil War (1861-1865) a renewed Anglo-American culture emerged with cross-cultural influences. At the end of the century a dispute over the boundaries of Venezuela and British Guyana ended with the UK ultimately conceding to the demands of the US in an unofficial acknowledgment of the superiority of US political power.

Although US affairs with the UK were amicable at the beginning of the War, the relationship was not infallible. In 1914 there were 10 million German-Americans in the US and millions of citizens of Irish descent who would have been unlikely supporters of a primarily British cause, and therefore the overriding US allegiance at the outset was to neutrality. This policy proved profitable to the US as the UK became dependent on US credit and exports. As early as October 1914, Britain ordered 400,000 rifles from the US and such orders continued for the duration of the war, often on credit, so that by the spring of 1917, Zieger reports, the British had borrowed the equivalent of more than \$2.7 billion from the US (equivalent to £42.4 billion in

²¹⁸ 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 3 June 1914, p. 8.

2018).²¹⁹ Some Americans felt more should be done to prepare for the possibility of war, such as building an army and a navy, and training men, but their physical distance from the battlefields and policy of neutrality meant they did not feel an imminent threat. On 7 May 1915 a German torpedo hit the *Lusitania*, the British passenger liner, off the coast of Ireland, resulting in the death of approximately 2,000 passengers and crew, including 128 US citizens. This increased anti-German sentiment but there was still no pressure to enter the war. On 24 March 1916 two Americans died after a German U-boat sank the French steamer *Sussex*. US President Woodrow Wilson (1856-1924) issued an ultimatum requiring Germany to abandon their current submarine warfare tactics or sever diplomatic ties with the US, resulting in Germany's agreement not to attack passenger or merchant ships without warning. However, the British naval blockade that had cut off vital supplies of food entering Germany since 1914 began to have a greater impact on the morale of the German people so that by February 1917, in an attempt to break the blockade, Germany abandoned its agreement and began a policy of unrestricted submarine warfare. US-German relations were severed on 3 February 1917 and the US declared war on 6 April.

Forbes-Robertson benefitted from US neutrality and the financial rewards of working in a 'creditor country' to the allies.²²⁰ His 1913-1914 Farewell Tour was immensely popular with the American and Canadian publics, making £107,000 (equivalent to £10.09 million in 2018) in 30 weeks of touring, which constituted a record and explains why he returned the following two years (although taking different routes.) Being the recipient of rewarding profits did not prevent him from being of use to the war effort, indeed he had at his disposal his greatest asset – his celebrity. He toured the US on nine occasions throughout his career and his celebrity was widespread. During his US tour of 1910 he had continued his work for women's suffrage by attending meetings, giving speeches, and making acquaintances with influential American campaigners.²²¹ One US report contended that '[n]o modern player has achieved the fame that is Forbes-Robertson's; he is admittedly the foremost actor of his time'.²²² He was listed as a favourite actor in surveys of the New York University College of Arts and School of Applied Science and Yale Seniors in 1915, and the 230 Princeton Seniors surveyed in 1916 collectively

²¹⁹ Exports increased from \$2 billion per year in 1913 to \$6 billion in 1916 (Robert H. Zieger, *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), pp. 14-17 and pp. 29-30).

²²⁰ 'Sir J. Forbes Robertson's Farewell Tour', *People*, 3 May 1914, p. 13.

²²¹ 'The American Stage', *Stage*, 27 January 1916, p. 26.

²²² 'At the Theatres', *Omaha Daily Bee*, 6 February 1916, p. 5.

listed him with John Barrymore (1882-1942), Charlie Chaplin (1889-1977), and Leo Dietrichstein (1865-1928) as their favourite actors.²²³ In Seattle over 256 visitors paid \$1 (approximately equivalent to £20.60 in 2018) to shake hands with Forbes-Robertson at a fundraiser tea event for charity, while at another fundraiser he sold autographs for \$1 each.²²⁴

In March 1914 the New York Press Club entertained Forbes-Robertson at a dinner and reportedly said, ‘As long as flags of great America and the old country are intertwined little can go wrong with the world’. The British Ambassador, Sir Cecil Rice (1859-1918), was absent but sent a letter of apology to the Club saying,

I am glad to think that you have among you a far more efficient representative of my countrymen than I could be and one who has done more viva voce to bring about the best and most sympathetic relations between our peoples than all the diplomatic dispatches that were ever sent.²²⁵

Thus were the actions of Forbes-Robertson consciously revealed as having an impact on global affairs – a role that Cooper attributes to the contemporary celebrity diplomat.²²⁶ This, of course, was before the War, but as a politicised celebrity, upon his return in September 1914 he was swiftly asked for reports from Britain. *The Evening Public Ledger* reports that he declared, ‘We are fighting with clean hands and we are fighting to the finish’.²²⁷ This statement has a distinctly political and poetical quality; as representative of his country he invoked the nation’s morality and resolve to beat their enemies. Similarly, he characterised his fellow citizens’ bravery when he reported,

Zeppelins have no terror for my countrymen. They have not even frightened people into staying in their houses. Our aviators are now as well prepared for keeping off the zeppelins as Paris is. We must and shall win, but it will be a long struggle.²²⁸

²²³ ‘N.Y.U. to Confer Honorary Degrees’, *Sun*, New York, 9 June 1915, p. 9; ‘Forbes-Robertson Wins’, *New York Tribune*, 21 February 1915, p. 1; and ‘Deny Ever Kissing A Girl’, *Western Kansas World*, 15 July 1916, p. 6.

²²⁴ ‘Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *Topeka State Journal*, 13 November 1915, p. 13; and ‘Mrs Gerard to assist Belgians’, *New York Tribune*, 10 October 1914, p. 7.

²²⁵ ‘Rice Praises Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson’, *Washington Post*, 16 March 1914, p. 3.

²²⁶ p. 12.

²²⁷ ‘Carnegie Defends Kaiser’s Efforts to Maintain Peace’, *Evening Public Ledger*, 25 September 1914, p. 4.

²²⁸ ‘Conscription Favoured by Forbes-Robertson’, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 October 1915, p. 4.

Forbes-Robertson was not a politician or a war general, and yet the US public were determined to hear his patriotic opinions on the subject and, as shall be demonstrated, they were deemed credible.

Forbes-Robertson advocated for closer relations by using his powerful oratory skills to charm the US public. On numerous occasions he counselled the US that they should prepare for war: ‘My farewell message to America – the America that I love so well – is that she must look sharp, get a big army and a big navy and be ready’.²²⁹ With his management of body language he was able to encourage interviewers’ empathies; one reported that ‘[w]hen he spoke of England his voice softened and the little mannerisms and idioms of speech noticeable when he conversed on other subjects were missing. He was dignified always, more so in his sadness for the land he loved’.²³⁰ Another report argued, ‘Wherever Sir J. Forbes Robertson goes the German lies circulated for American consumption have a bad time’.²³¹ Thus was Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity a powerful tool in generating an affinity between people and his public image increased the reputation of the British nation.

Anselm Heinrich discusses Tree’s appropriation of Shakespeare as a patriotic icon in the US to encourage unity between the US and UK.²³² However, Forbes-Robertson’s celebrity legacy in the US was more enduring than Tree’s, who visited the US only in 1895, 1896, and 1916. Tree was in the US, along with Forbes-Robertson, when the 1916 Tercentenary of Shakespeare’s birth took place. Werner Habicht has explored how journalists in England and Germany used Shakespeare as cultural ammunition as both sides quoted Shakespeare in their propaganda material around the time of the Tercentenary. Heinrich also explains that during the war ‘both countries [claimed] to be the true keepers of Shakespeare’s heritage’.²³³ In her analysis of the Tercentenary celebrations, Monika Smialkowska finds that it was celebrated with gusto in the US. The American dramatist and poet Percy MacKaye (1875-1956), for example, wrote a masque for the occasion. It was a symbolic play showing the development of drama through the ages

²²⁹ G. A. M., ‘Get a Big Navy Actor’s Advice’, *El Paso Herald*, 30 November 1915, p. 5. See also ‘Conscription Favoured [...]’ p. 4.

²³⁰ ‘Sir Johnstone Forbes-Robertson Speaks of his Long Life...’, *Arizona Republican*, 4 December 1915, p. 6.

²³¹ ‘German Lies have a Bad Time’, *Daily Gazette for Middlesborough*, 16 October 1915, p. 3.

²³² ‘Reclaiming Shakespeare 1914–1918’, in (2015 Maunder) pp. 65-80.

²³³ *Ibid.*, p. 71.

from Egypt, to Greece, and the rest of Europe and eventually to England. Tercentenary events ranged from such state-organised lavish affairs, to local low-key community events such as amateur dramatics and book readings.

Forbes-Robertson spoke at an Easter Sunday service in honour of Shakespeare at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York, along with fellow British actors Tree and Frederick Warde (1851-1935).²³⁴ In England there was a conscious division of Shakespeare from the divine but, on this occasion, the bard and the Bible were proffered as equals. The following three days, 24th – 26th April, Forbes-Robertson played *Hamlet* at Harvard University on a specially erected Elizabethan stage in the Sanders Theatre. On this stage he announced that it would be the final time he would play *Hamlet* in public. He departed for England just a few days later and addressed the US public via the *New York Times*:

I am very happy to see a closer bond constantly growing between the English-speaking races, and it is fitting that the theatre should help to make stronger this relationship. At the present time, when the Shakespeare Tercentenary is in the minds of the public, we can the more rejoice in our mutual ownership of this greatest of all dramatists and poets. My message to the American public is to believe in the best, and to give encouragement to ability wherever it is shown, but of this I feel certain, for you possess that ready sympathy and appreciation which is as delightful as it is perhaps rare.²³⁵

The most celebrated English actor of Shakespeare was gifting joint ownership of Shakespeare to the American people in addition to granting them his final performance of *Hamlet*.

Forbes-Robertson's diplomacy continued even after his official retirement from the stage and after the US committed to the war. A newspaper reported that at a bazaar in New York for the benefit of the allies in November 1917, Forbes-Robertson represented England as he declared

amid tremendous cheers, that blood shed in common was the cement of nations. He predicted as one compensation for this war that British-American friendship would be so intimate and enduring that a new era in the world's history would be inaugurated – an era of peace, prosperity, and harmony, which a few idle years ago would have been dismissed as an idle dream.²³⁶

It is impossible to ascertain whether the 'tremendous cheers' were cheering for him the celebrity, or his words, but it was likely the combined cathartic effect of the two. Despite having no official ties with the British Government or the War Office, Forbes-Robertson used his theatrical

²³⁴ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 279.

²³⁵ 'Forbes-Robertson's Farewell', *New York Times*, 29 April 1916.

²³⁶ 'Allied Bazaar in New York', *Scotsman*, 30 November 1917, p. 6.

celebrity to encourage a closer relationship between the nations and his 'gift' of Shakespeare to the US was a diplomatic act from a celebrity to his fans with the intention of mobilising his Shakespeare associations to continue and further a political allegiance in war time.

Following a luncheon at the House of Commons on 15 April 1918 during the course of the American Labor Mission to Britain, Chester M. Wright, representative of the US Typographical Union and assistant secretary to the American Labour Mission, recorded that he sat next to Forbes-Robertson at the luncheon. During the meeting they discussed the British-US War of Independence and he reported a suggestion made by Forbes-Robertson:

Let there be a joint British-American commission created to unite a verified and accurate history of Revolutionary days, and let the history so produced be taught in the schools of both nations. Let both sides drop forever the small untruths that have grown up around the story of that conflict.²³⁷

Forbes-Robertson's suggestion to re-write the history of the British-US relationship is indicative of his desire to improve future relations. It is not clear in what capacity Forbes-Robertson attended the lunch but an analysis of the political context surrounding the event offers suggestions of what his role may have been in the proceedings.

Despite America's declaration of war in April 1917 and the arrival of the first American combat troops in France by the end of May 1917, there were pockets of resistance against the war fomenting amongst the allied forces. After the failure of the Nivelle Offensive in April, French soldiers were particularly feeling the effects of the incessant attrition and bombardment from Germany and, on 27 May, 30,000 soldiers began to mutiny.²³⁸ The mutinies of France did not compare with those in Russia where war-fatigue at the great loss of life, social issues (such as food shortages), and hostility towards the Tsarist regime resulted in revolution and, in March 1917, the revolutionaries overthrew Emperor Nicholas II (1868-1918) and installed a Provisional Government. The return of socialist Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov (better known as Lenin, 1870-1924) to Russia in April 1917 continued resistance to the War and resulted in the rise of Bolshevism and, a revolution beginning in October, led to the replacement of the Provisional Government with the Bolsheviks. The Provisional Government had intended to continue with the War but

²³⁷ Chester M. Wright, 'How They Carry On', *New York Tribune*, 30 June 1918, p. 2.

²³⁸ Gilbert, p. 333.

Lenin and the Bolsheviks were determined to have peace and so, on 3 March 1918, they signed the Treaty of Brest-Litvosk with Germany with major territorial losses for Russia.

In 1917 the Bolsheviks had promoted the idea of a negotiated peace with labour groups in Germany. Some members of international labour groups who had visited Russia were becoming convinced of, or at least sympathetic towards, this method of diplomacy. The theory of those seeking conference with German labour groups was that the German people did not understand the war aims of the allied forces, and therefore they were fighting for their homes; if it became clear that Britain and France did not desire imperialist territorial gains then the German people would put pressure on their government to end the war.²³⁹

Prime Minister David Lloyd George (1863-1945) had sent Arthur Henderson (1863-1935), leader of the Labour Party, to Russia on 30 May 1917 hoping to curb the spread of Bolshevism and bolster support for the war. However, Henderson returned from Russia having learned lessons of the ‘horror of revolution and belief in the need for pre-emptive reformist measures’.²⁴⁰ He became committed to suppressing any revolutionary tendencies in the UK and the Labour constitution of 1918 became more overtly socialist in its outlook. For instance, in Clause IV it demonstrated a commitment to nationalisation and common ownership of industry. These changes of policy may have contributed to the reversal of Labour’s fortunes; in 1914 Labour was struggling for existence and the party was divided by those who were in favour of and against war, but by 1918 it was a chief opposition party. The Labour Party relied heavily on members of trade unions, so the increase in Labour’s popularity was largely due to the growing influence of trade unions. In 1914 there were 1,260 trade unions with 4,145,000 trade union members in Britain; by 1918 the number of trade unions had only grown by four but memberships had soared to 6,533,000.²⁴¹ The government needed the support of the trade unions and so made concessions to factory workers. Those who opposed the Bolshevik peace dialogue, such as the US, were worried that Labour’s influence with the trade unions could result in a stalled production of materials necessary for the War if the peace dialogue proposal became popular. Woodrow Wilson released his Fourteen War Aims to Congress on 8 January 1918 as a counter to the growing

²³⁹ H. K. Moderwell, ‘Allied Labor Unit for Victory – Divided on Means’, *New York Tribune*, 16 June 1918, p. 5.

²⁴⁰ Tony Cliff and Donny Gluckstein, ‘The Labour Party: A Marxist History’, July 1996 (October 1988), in <https://marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1988/labour.html>, [accessed 1 November 2017].

²⁴¹ *Ibid.*

influence in Europe of a Bolshevik-inspired peace and the members of the US labour groups refused to negotiate with German workers at all.²⁴²

Not only was the US becoming suspicious of the labour groups of the UK and France, by April 1918 the allied forces' frustration with the US grew as far fewer troops arrived from the US than had been anticipated.²⁴³ Martin Gilbert describes how '[a]nti-American feeling was widespread in high British and French military circles, where the Americans were portrayed as amateurs, interlopers and latecomers'.²⁴⁴ In this climate, labour groups established parties to travel to the other countries to gain an understanding of the war aims of other labour groups, and the commercial, industrial, and social work taking place for the war effort. These exchanges of labour groups included an exchange between the UK and the US.

The British Labour Mission visited cities in the US in March and April 1918 at the invitation of the American Federation of Labor, and the American Labour and Sociological Mission arrived in Britain on 12 April before continuing on to France in May. The visit by the US delegation can be seen as an attempt to bolster flagging support for the war amongst the British Labour movement whose support, by that time, was absolutely crucial to keep discontented workers and soldiers onside in a context where revolution was spreading in Europe. It was also an opportunity for the British and French to emphasise the urgency of their needs for reinforcement and expedite the arrival of American forces. Newspapers reported the presence of

²⁴² The points focussed on: ensuring treaties were made in the public eye, safe seafaring conditions, creating equal trade conditions, reducing naval armaments, restoring territorial disputes and creating autonomous states in Eastern Europe, and creating an association of nations to guarantee these political independences (Gilbert, p. 394).

²⁴³ The American Secretary of War, Newton D. Baker, insisted that troops should not be sent to the war until they were fully trained. It was originally indicated that there would be 1,000,000 American troops on the Western Front by summer 1918, but by November 1917 it was clear that a more realistic figure was 525,000 by May 1918 as, not only were the men not trained, they did not have the ships to transport supplies and food for them. In January 1918 a request for trained American troops to join British and French divisions was denied and only in May was it acquiesced for some of the troops to join existing divisions. Thus, by the end of May, 650,000 American troops were in Europe but two-thirds of them would not join the line until an entire American army could be created (Gilbert, p. 378-421).

²⁴⁴ p. 416.

the American guests in Britain and there was even newsreel footage of their activities played at cinemas purposed to boost morale for people on the home front.²⁴⁵

William Archibald Appleton (1859-1940), a British trade union leader, led the General Federation of Trade Unions mission to the US where, according to a contemporary press report, he observed that ‘Americans really knew very little of the part which Britain was playing in the war. This, he thought, was due to an inadequate system of publicity, and he hoped that in future greater publicity might be given’.²⁴⁶ The US mission to Britain appears to have answered this call for greater publicity, as Wright, for instance, returned to the US and described how the

English people are at war in a way that Americans do not know of – in a way that can scarcely be understood unless seen. The people of England are consecrated to this war – and what is more, they are demonstrating the reality of their consecration by unremitting physical effort.²⁴⁷

The US mission to Britain consisted of 19 delegates, of which six were women, representing various trades and industries. In addition to attending formal lunches and dinners, they gave speeches to workers in munitions factories, visited manufacturing centres in Brighton, the Naval fleet in Rosyth, and the shipyards on the Clyde.²⁴⁸

During this mission the British hoped to inspire the Americans and appeal to their sentimentalism by producing an idea of a quaint merrie England with its traditions threatened, as indicated at the luncheon at the House of Commons. MP George Barnes (1859-1940) chaired the meeting and, in attendance were Arthur Balfour (Foreign Secretary, 1848-1930), former and present ambassadors to the US, newspaper publishers, and numerous Ministers and representatives of labour and trade unions.²⁴⁹ During his address, Barnes expressed his hope that the US guests would find England ‘full of charming quaintness and picturesqueness that were peculiar to an old country’, and discover places and buildings that were ‘the birthplace of the representative institutions for the freedom for which our peoples were now striving’.²⁵⁰ Thus

²⁴⁵ For newsreel footage of the American Labour Mission, see Gaumont Graphic No. 738 ‘Our American Guests’ (18 April 1918), and Topical Budget 351-2 ‘American Labour Delegates’s Visit to the Fleet’ (20 May 1918) in the BFI archives.

²⁴⁶ ‘Need of Publicity’, *Times*, 1 May 1918, p. 7.

²⁴⁷ Chester M. Wright, ‘England As Seen By American’, *Labor World*, 11 May 1918, p. 2.

²⁴⁸ ‘American Mission’, *Times*, 13 April 1918, p. 3.

²⁴⁹ ‘End War Or It Will End Us’, *Globe*, 15 April 1918, p. 1.

²⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

Barnes invoked the long history of Britain and the idea that the US should also fight to secure this heritage.

Balfour then indulged his American guests with adulation before outlining the requirement for a speedy American involvement in the war:

As the Germans have been proved hopelessly wrong in their estimates of the ideals, desires and determination of the American people, [...] so they will be proved wrong in their estimate as to the speed with which the Americans will be able to carry out their purpose and programme. [...] The thought uppermost in all British minds to-day is confidence that America will upset the German plans, that America will be able to send over her indomitable forces in a way which no German General Staff Officer has ever calculated. It is men we need now.²⁵¹

He also alluded to Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar* when he claimed that the German authorities tell their people that they will dominate Europe and 'Germany is to be the Colossus which bestrides the world'. The phrase invokes Cassius's deprecation of Caesar's pride and power in Rome when he says that Caesar 'doth bestride the narrow world / Like a Colossus'.²⁵² The allusions to Shakespeare and thus to Britain's traditions and heritage, and Britain's belief in the might of the Americans signify the purpose of this meeting.

Forbes-Robertson's presence at this meeting can be understood in a range of ways. It is likely that he attended the event in his capacity as the outgoing 1917 President of the Actors' Association (AA), although H. B. Irving was the President for the year 1918. At its AGM in which Forbes-Robertson was elected as President on 1 April 1917, members emphasised the need for the AA during war. Only an eighth of theatre workers subscribed to the AA and yet, they argued, the AA was a necessary force should a theatre worker need representation against the government. The Restricted Occupations Order classified actors as non-essential workers and therefore could be called for Military Service. Additionally, employers in non-essential industries were not permitted to employ a man aged between 18 and 61. This would have spelled ruin for the theatre industry but trades union representatives had bargained with the government that workers could be employed in their industries provided they enrol for some kind of Military Service. The Chairman, Alexander, proposed that the AA should organise themselves to be of service to the war effort, suggesting that they assemble a list of its members' skills and present it

²⁵¹ 'Balfour Calls on America to Rush Troops', *New York Tribune*, 16 April 1918, p. 1-2.

²⁵² 'Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world / Like a Colossus,' (*Julius Caesar*, I.II.135-136).

to the government should their skills be required for war work. ‘By doing this,’ Alexander argued, ‘we should justify our existence as a profession, and show that we appreciate the prosperity which has been ours since the war began’.²⁵³ Thus, although the AA did not become an official trade union until 1919, it operated in the same capacity and, as President, Forbes-Robertson was the equivalent of a union leader (Chapter 4 discusses the development of the AA in further detail). He could therefore speak for the profession in describing the theatre industry’s war efforts by way of fundraising events, benefit matinees, and hospital performances, as well as maintaining morale for civilians.

Balfour’s objective in the 15 April 1918 House of Commons meeting was to convey the urgency for more US troops on the Western Front. It is also noteworthy that Forbes-Robertson too had made his own calls for recruitment and conscription. In his autobiography he put forward his belief in National Service, arguing that the War would not have been so devastating had Britain been a nation of individuals trained for war.²⁵⁴ As early as October 1915 while in the US, Forbes-Robertson argued that conscription was a certainty and a positive thing that would ‘wake up the people of England and show who are the cowards, [...] England needs and ought to have all the men who are able to fight.’²⁵⁵ Having been a sergeant in the Artists’ Rifles unit, he continued to support their need for more recruits.²⁵⁶ Foreseeing a shortage of men for the Officer Training Corps, the writer H. G. Wells (1866-1946) wrote to regional newspapers advertising the need for more men in the Artists’ Rifles.²⁵⁷ Forbes-Robertson supplemented this call with a column of his own in newspapers across the nation that, in hyperbolic terms, particularly encouraged journalists to join ‘this now historic regiment for the training of officers for our glorious Army’.²⁵⁸ The *Sporting Times* reported that following the appeals of Wells and Forbes-Robertson the Artists’ Rifles had been ‘snowed under’ with applications from new recruits.²⁵⁹ According to Wilfred Owen’s (1893-1918) biographer, Jon Stallworthy, Owen joined the Artists’ Rifles in October 1915 after being inspired by their Romantic heritage: “‘Lord Leighton [1830-

²⁵³ ‘The Actors’ Association. Annual General Meeting’, *Stage*, 5 April 1917, p. 14.

²⁵⁴ p. 305.

²⁵⁵ ‘Conscription Favoured by Forbes-Robertson’, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 October 1915, p. 4.

²⁵⁶ The Artists’ Rifles was a unit formed in 1860 which recruited largely from public schools and universities.

²⁵⁷ See for example, ‘The Artists’ Rifles’, *Belfast Newsletter*, 7 November 1916, p. 7.

²⁵⁸ See for example, ‘The Artists’ Rifles’, *Newcastle Journal*, 13 November 1916, p. 3.

²⁵⁹ ‘The Duke’s Diary’, *Sporting Times*, 25 November 1916, p. 1.

1896], Millais, Forbes Robertson”, he told his mother, “were in Artists’ Rifles!!”²⁶⁰ Owen was determined on enlistment but sought the most aesthetic and poetical route into the war and this he found in the Artists’ due to its associations with the celebrities who had served before him, indicating that the name and public persona of celebrities such as Forbes-Robertson had powerful connotations.

In a speech introducing Forbes-Robertson as the 1917 AA President, Alexander described the attributes that made him an ideal candidate: ‘Throughout your entire career you have been a man who has served your profession with honour, with loyalty, and with high ideals’.²⁶¹ Such were the qualities he brought to the meeting at the House of Commons. He also brought a public image which would likely have been more than familiar to the American guests. His friendship with the Americans and familiarity with their country after nine extended visits there and an American wife, his status as the reputed greatest stage actor and the greatest Hamlet, and his will to aid recruitment were attributes that aligned with the themes of the luncheon that promoted British heritage and culture, and cordiality with the Americans. Forbes-Robertson’s theatrical celebrity was therefore employed for his potential to play an influential role in politics and international diplomacy as he could represent his nation by representing his industry.

3.8 Conclusion

As a celebrity, Forbes-Robertson epitomises a streamlined version of his society’s values. The Forbes-Robertson celebrity brand had connotations of beauty, aestheticism, and gentility attached to it and, through associations with Shakespeare, it invoked ideas of the British nation, culture and heritage. As an actor Forbes-Robertson’s public subjectivity also included a confluence of fictional selves that he performed on stage and, by the end of his career, The Stranger in *Passing* was a dominating figure. The meaning contained within his public subjectivity transferred to his national and international public who consumed this celebrity brand in an attempt to transfer the desirable qualities on to their own subjectivities. As a theatre performer, Forbes-Robertson’s plays were the initial location of the creation and communicating of his celebrity, but he used his celebrity as a vehicle to diversify into consumerist, political, activist, and diplomatic realms.

²⁶⁰ Frederic, Baron Leighton (1830-96), was President of the Royal Academy 1878-1896 (Jon Stallworthy, *Wilfred Owen* (Oxford: UP, 1974 repr. 1998), pp. 123-124).

²⁶¹ ‘The Actors’ Association. Annual General Meeting’, *Stage*, 5 April 1917, p. 14.

This chapter analyses Forbes-Robertson's role as an endorser of products and spaces to deconstruct how celebrity endorsements create meaning for commodities. Aspects of his public persona that were signifiers of beauty and fashion transferred to consumer products (such as cigarettes and soap) bringing individuality to indistinguishable mass-produced items. Meanwhile, his opening of the Sherman Grand Theatre conceptualised a cultural and political framework for the building and the wider area of Calgary based on his presence as a signifier of Britishness and British heritage. Through the same process he endorsed social causes. He used his entertainment medium (the stage) as a vehicle for his activism for women's suffrage and fundraising work, but his career had furnished him with skills that rendered him an effective activist out of the theatre too. Of particular note, actors were trained and effective communicators and this was a particularly essential asset for Forbes-Robertson due to the importance of his lyrical voice to his celebrity profile. Members of the theatre were experienced at hosting large-scale events and using their celebrity to attract patrons but, in the same way that meaning traverses to a commodity, meaning transferred to supporters of causes.

Celebrities, as embodiments of accrued meaning, allowed their consumers to negotiate their own selfhood through association with commodities and causes championed by the celebrities. However, celebrities did not simply reflect current social values but simultaneously provided a larger social function by providing models of changing attitudes and values. Forbes-Robertson was an ideal figurehead to champion female suffrage as he radiated an unfrontational and uncontroversial version of masculinity and so paved the way for other men to take up the cause without the need to feel emasculated. As an activist then he was also a proxy for change.

Forbes-Robertson's role in using performance as a means of raising public awareness and fundraising for humanitarian causes with a particular political edge consolidated his persona as a socially conscious actor and provides evidence that the theatre was an arena for political exploration and activist activities. Simultaneously, Forbes-Robertson went beyond lecturing on his own views to representing his nation and acting in a diplomatic capacity during the War. His physical presence at high-profile events and engagement with military recruitment and improving relations between the UK and the US triggered meaning and ideologies beyond the War as he served as a reminder of 'home' and British heritage. This demonstrates that celebrities at the turn of the twentieth century had a commercial and social value and were active outside of their entertainment field.

Chapter 4. Celebrity Within the Theatre Industry

‘I take the theatre seriously, I respect its significance in the arts of the world, its opportunity to take us out of ourselves.’

–Forbes-Robertson, 1909¹

4.1 Introduction

During the course of Forbes-Robertson’s career members of the acting community sought to regulate and improve their working conditions. This chapter assesses Forbes-Robertson’s activities to explore how theatre celebrities at the turn of the nineteenth century made use of their celebrity value and, on occasions, misunderstood the value of their celebrity, when bringing about changes within the theatre industry. The first section of this chapter analyses Forbes-Robertson’s involvement in theatre committees and societies that supported the industry and investigates the value celebrities brought to these bodies, specifically in moving it towards professionalisation, standardisation, and public subsidy. The discussion then focusses on the movement towards developing a national theatre. Forbes-Robertson’s early career in actor-management demonstrates that a national theatre was desirable to some managers who were tethered to commercial theatre and could not practice experimental forms of theatre production for fear of disappointing financial returns. When Forbes-Robertson transitioned from an actor to an actor-manager it did not necessarily bring him artistic freedom as he had already established a brand associated with his name. As he would learn, deviating from character roles that allowed him to showcase the public persona for which he was known often resulted in commercial failure. His choices of plays and roles in the twentieth century show him becoming more risk-averse and protective of his celebrity brand. The section then analyses some of Forbes-Robertson’s attempts to use his celebrity to promote the National Theatre project, but also explains why celebrity may have caused the project to fail at that time.

The chapter then traverses the celebrity promotion of the Academy of Dramatic Art (ADA). In contrast to the National Theatre movement, theatre stars embraced their celebrity and reinforced the power of celebrity in the establishment and maintaining of the ADA. The ADA placed value on the celebrities who patronised the institution and, when it was struggling under

¹ ‘Forbes-Robertson Discusses the Advanced Theatre: A World-wide Evolution of Unusual Dramatic Qualities’, *New York Times*, 10 October 1909, p. 8.

war-induced financial pressures, it was the collaboration of stage heritage, celebrity, and the modern film industry that saved the school from closure. By this point in his career, Forbes-Robertson had a much stronger understanding of his own celebrity and its power to realise change within the industry.

4.2 Societies, Committees, and Associations

When Forbes-Robertson took the chair at the 58th Annual Dinner of the Royal General Theatrical Fund (RGTF) at the Whitehall Rooms, Hôtel Métropole on 21 May 1903, he declared,

I accuse twenty-three members of the House of Commons of a wilful and therefore criminal ignorance of the theatrical life, and of working tooth and nail to deprive these children of a training that can only be of the greatest benefit to them, of depriving them of better clothing, better surroundings, better associates, better food than they would have were they shut out of the theatre.²

The subject of his condemnation was the Employment of Children Bill, then before Parliament, which proposed lifting the minimum age for children (under the age of 16) in employment from seven to ten and preventing them from working between nine in the evening and six in the morning.³ Also on his evening's agenda, was stressing the importance of the RGTF to members of the theatre profession to encourage more subscribers:

[I]f in 1838, when the Fund was founded, the leaders of the theatrical calling thought there was great need for the existence of such an Institution, how much more was that need when in London, instead of six theatres, there [are] now over thirty, and when actors must be counted by thousands instead of by hundreds?⁴

These remarks illustrate that Forbes-Robertson was a candid spokesperson on subjects affecting the theatre industry and those who occupied a position within it. This section demonstrates that theatre associations and councils relied on the activism of theatre celebrities to promote the interests of the industry (or at least what they believed to be the interests of the industry) and raise funds to help members through times of hardship.

The RGTF had its inaugural meeting on 7 November 1838 at the Haymarket Theatre where it established a charitable fund for actors with powers to grant pensions to its members after the age of 60 for men and 55 for women. Members who were incapacitated before this age by

² 'Children's Employment Bill', *Stage*, 28 May 1903, p. 12.

³ The Employment of Children Act 1903 came into effect on 1 January 1904.

⁴ 'Royal General Theatrical Fund', *London Evening Standard*, 22 May 1903, p. 8.

accident or infirmity could also claim an annuity if they had been a subscribed member for seven years.⁵ The RGTF was therefore an example of one of the theatre bodies that appeared during the Victorian era that contributed towards professionalising the theatre industry by improving working conditions and standards.⁶

4.2.1 Professional Bodies in the Victorian Period

The organisation of committees and societies to benefit members of the theatre profession was typical of other industries of the Victorian period, but, with the exception of the RGTF, such associations appeared later than for other professions. Over the course of the century the working-class nation reacted to the social effects of the Industrial Revolution – the principal points of discontent being low wages, long hours, and unsafe working conditions. The growth of Chartism, demanding universal male suffrage, from 1837 to 1848, and the resulting Parliamentary Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1885 (which saw the number of voters grow from 1.3 million to 5.7 million) and the emergence of trade unions after their legalisation in 1871, led to the gradual but eventual organisation of workers. This was most evident in the formation of the Independent Labour Party in 1893 that became the Labour Party in 1900. Friendly societies or general funds, such as the RGTF, flourished in this period of economic *laissez-faire* before the creation of a welfare state, providing financial security for those in crisis.

According to Harold Perkin, professional associations increased during the long nineteenth century – beginning with seven in 1800, increasing by a further 20 by 1880, and 39 more before 1914.⁷ Perkin suggests that acting belonged to a group of professions unique to the ‘intellectual

⁵ It was initially known as the General Theatrical Fund but was incorporated by Royal Charter in 1853 becoming the RGTF. On 7 October 1987 members changed the name again to the Royal Theatrical Fund (Wendy Trewin, *The Royal General Theatrical Fund* (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1989), p. v – 5).

⁶ There were numerous small-scale friendly societies that were associated with individual theatres, districts, or occupations, but the jurisdiction of RGTF was greater. See Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991 repr. 2002) p. 58.

⁷ In 1800 the qualifying associations were four Inns of Court for barristers, two Royal Colleges, and a Society of Apothecaries. Between 1800 and 1880 the emergent associations were for solicitors, architects, builders, pharmacists, veterinary surgeons, actuaries, surveyors, chemists, librarians, bankers, accountants, and eight types of engineers. Between 1880 and 1914 the associations were for chartered accountants, auctioneers, estate agents, company secretaries,

class' which included 'men of letters', 'men of science', university teachers, and members of the fine arts.⁸ Although actors in the period could benefit from the Dramatic, Equestrian and Musical Sick Fund Association (formed in 1855 but merged with the RGTF in 1904) and, from 1882, the Actors' Benevolent Fund (ABF), the acting community did not unionise officially until 1919. L. C. B. Seaman explains that friendly societies and trade unions were distinctly working-class in nature, in the sense that 'they were run by, and for, working people. The nobility, gentry and the employing class generally, had no part' in these organisations.⁹ As explored in the Introduction, the actor's social status was not easily categorised and, amongst the young middle-class men who entered the profession from the 1860s, there was little inclination to form the political, social, or welfare groups typically associated with workers. Baker argues that

the chief obstacle to theatrical 'combination' in this period lay in the very reason that the player achieved professional status. [...The gentrification of the stage] was a drive which did not lend itself to political activism of the sort taking place in the workshops of the nation, indeed it produced a positive distaste for labour politics with all its proletarian associations. Hence the self-conscious preference of the profession for a genteel phraseology, for 'salaries' rather than 'wages', for 'resting' rather than 'unemployed', and for 'associations' rather than 'unions'; and hence the laborious path towards self-protection in the theatre [...] so many years behind other occupations. It was only when middle-class actors themselves began to experience some of the worst forms of theatrical exploitation, that efforts began to be made to 'organise' in the form of the Actors' Association of 1891 and the Actors' Union of 1905.¹⁰

The difficulty therefore lay in the fact that acting, as a profession, was incompatible with identifying acting as a form of labour. Ultimately, however, the industry required unions in order to offer the necessary protections for a profession.

While the theatre industry sought to professionalise itself by hiring actors from the middle class, improving the physical conditions of the theatre houses, attracting a genteel audience, and creating associations or unions to address industrial issues, part of the industry's pursuit for self-

hospital administrators, marine, mining, water, sanitary, heating and ventilating, and locomotive design engineers, insurance brokers, sales managers, town planners, and also additional non-qualifying associations, such as National Union of Teachers, Association of Headmasters, Association of Teachers in Technical Institutions, National Association of Local Government Officers, Civil Service Clerical Association, Institute of Directors. See Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989 repr. 2002) pp. 85-86.

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Victorian England: Aspects of English and Imperial History 1837-1901* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002), p. 100.

¹⁰ Baker, p. 137.

improvement lay in ‘improving’ the quality of the drama produced. A move towards specialisation was typical of Victorian mentality across other fields and industries, but in the theatre industry it materialised in activism for a national theatre that could display experimental and cutting-edge drama, and a dramatic school that could coach actors for the stage. Both had long been touted as necessary for the advancement of the profession, particularly since the 1870s, but it was only after the formation of the Actors’ Association that there was a unified body that could collectively address these issues and bring their aspirations closer to reality. Forbes-Robertson became an active spokesperson and player in the campaigns for a national theatre and a dramatic school. While the campaign for a national theatre progressed during Forbes-Robertson’s lifetime, ultimately it did not materialise until 1963 and did not have its own building until 1976, long after Forbes-Robertson’s death in 1937.¹¹ The Academy of Dramatic Art (ADA), on the other hand, was founded in 1904, but without the efforts of Forbes-Robertson and his comrade theatre celebrities it would have been forced to cease operations during the War due to lack of finances. The ADA committee’s film of *Masks and Faces*, produced in 1917 to raise funds, kept the academy afloat and, in 1920, it received a Royal Charter to become RADA, which still operates today. This section analyses the role of celebrity in the establishment of the industry’s associations, particularly in the making of *Masks and Faces*, and argues that the film is a celebration of theatrical celebrity despite the use of another medium.

4.2.2 Forbes-Robertson’s Early Involvement

The acting community’s associated bodies had the means to self-promote and fundraise to boost dwindling finances. The RGTF, for instance, took an annual fee from subscribers, and hosted an annual dinner and fundraising benefit performance at Drury Lane. Forbes-Robertson’s early activism for theatre committees began with appearing in these performances. As early as 28 February 1881, he performed at a RGTF benefit at Drury Lane with Modjeska in the last act of *Adrienne Lecouvreur* alongside stage celebrities including Edwin Booth, Ellen Terry, Henry Irving, and J. L. Toole (1830-1906), and the event raised £806.0s.2d (equivalent to £79,860 in 2018).¹²

¹¹ In the interim years the National Theatre Company used the Old Vic Theatre.

¹² He also appeared in benefits in 1894, 1895, 1897, and 1902 for the RGTF, (Trewin, p. 60, pp. 81-84, and p. 94).

The ABF – which, with the expected responsibilities of an actor-manager, Forbes-Robertson committed to long-term – also used celebrities to boost its funds. He attended the fund’s first general meeting on 21 February 1883 at the Lyceum Theatre, after which *The Era* reported that its purpose was to ‘give sorely-needed help [... to] members of the profession who are not in engagements to get through the weary time of waiting’.¹³ He continued to attend the annual meetings, in 1886 and 1893 he subscribed an additional £5 (equivalent to £535 and £544.70 in 2018), and he was still involved with assisting the fund at the age of 77 when he supervised a production of *Hamlet* to benefit the ABF.¹⁴ It was not always necessary for a theatre celebrity to be on the stage to contribute to such fundraising events. Another report in *The Era*, following an event on 3 July 1899, listed Forbes-Robertson and the Prince of Wales (future Edward VII) among the celebrities who were in the audience of the revue *Pot-Pourri* – performed at the Avenue Theatre with collections for the ABF and the Actors’ Orphanage Fund.¹⁵ At such an event, the opportunity to mingle with such celebrities attracted attendees. Other fundraising methods included sales of celebrity autographs. On 9 July 1913, *The Era* reported that Forbes-Robertson had forwarded £16.10s (equivalent to £1,595 in 2018) to the ABF that he had raised by selling his autograph throughout his Drury Lane season.¹⁶ On 1 October 1913, *The Era* described how ‘[a]ctors’ autographs continue to be a good source of revenue to the Actors’ Benevolent Fund. Sir J. Forbes-Robertson has been almost daily remitting, and he has since June forwarded to the secretary the substantial sum of £18 16s. 6d. (equivalent to £1,819 in 2018).¹⁷ This evidences the deliberate cultivation of a celebrity culture that recognised the value of its celebrities in generating attention and funds.

¹³ ‘The Actors’ Benevolent Fund’, *Era*, 24 February 1883, p. 5.

¹⁴ ‘Actors’ Benevolent Fund’, *Era*, 12 January 1884, p. 8; ‘Actors’ Benevolent Fund’, *Era*, 19 June 1886, p. 13; ‘Actors’ Benevolent Fund’, *Era*, 23 March 1893, p. 15; and ‘Shakespeare Day’, *Stage*, 24 April 1930, p. 15.

¹⁵ ‘A Professional Matinee’, *Era*, 8 July 1899, p. 14. Kittie Carson founded The Actors’ Orphanage in 1896 with Irving as the first president. It focused on raising money for the children of actors until it opened an orphanage in Croydon in 1906 and established a fund in 1912. It now operates as the Actors’ Children’s Trust.

¹⁶ ‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 9 July 1913, p. 16.

¹⁷ ‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 1 October 1913, p. 18.

4.2.3 *The Actors' Association (AA)*

From the 1890s the workers of the theatre industry exerted pressure to unionise. The Theatrical and Music Hall Operatives' Trade Union formed in 1890 after the Adelphi Theatre dismissed twelve carpenters following a request for a wage increase.¹⁸ Shortly after, on 1 February 1891, Benson and Robert Courtneidge (1859-1939) held a meeting in the Victoria Hotel in Manchester to found the AA. They resolved that the AA would elect a committee with powers to arbitrate primarily on dealings with 'bogus' managers, insanitary dressing rooms, and unscrupulous actors.

By 16 March 1891, membership numbered 320 but, by the time Forbes-Robertson was elected as a new member at the first annual general meeting on 3 March 1892, there were over 750 members.¹⁹ This represented a small segment of the estimated 20,000 actors in Britain at the time, but the AA was £111.4s.5d. in credit (equivalent to £11,880 in 2018), and had already been involved in cases of enforcing payments of salary, reimbursing travel expenses, and several cases of unsanitary theatres, so the AA was proving itself useful and necessary.²⁰ As Forbes-Robertson manoeuvred into actor-management after 1895, his position in the acting community also elevated. He chaired a council meeting of the AA on 23 February 1897, was elected as a vice-president at the annual general meeting on 29 March 1898, and was then elected a life member in October 1900.²¹

The complicating feature of the AA was that actors could be both employees and employers especially in the 1890s when the actor-management system was at its height. Initially, Irving was against the concept of unionisation, as, he believed, it would set managers and actors against each other. Courtneidge acknowledged this unusual trade feature in his opening statement when he moved that

whilst this Association is determined to crush the infamies of bogus management, it is also most anxious to enforce honest conduct on the part of its members – i.e., to compel the

¹⁸ From 1900 it became known as the National Association of Theatrical Employees (Davis, (2000), p. 326.)

¹⁹ He had been in New York performing in *Thermidor* in Autumn 1891 but in 1892 he was in London engaged with Irving at the Lyceum in the role as Buckingham in *Henry VIII*.

²⁰ Richards, p. 68; 'The Actors' Association', *Era*, 21 March 1891, p. 8; and 'The Actors' Association', *Era*, 5 March 1892, p. 13.

²¹ 'Nelson on the Stage', *Era*, 27 February 1897, p. 13; 'The Actors' Association', *Era*, 2 April 1898, p. 9; and 'Stage Subjection', *Era*, 27 October 1900, p. 17.

honourable fulfilment of their responsibilities to managers, landladies of lodging-houses, &c, and to stamp out as far as it is possible those instances of reckless or fraudulent action whose scandal reflects disgrace upon the entire profession[.]²²

Despite this suggestion that the committee would be impartial and arbitrate for both actors and managers, the committee positions were generally occupied by actor-managers – on 29 April 1891, Irving was elected as president with Barrett, Lionel Brough (1836-1909), Hare, Edward Terry (1844-1912), and Ellen Terry as vice-presidents.²³ After Irving's death in 1905 tensions escalated as some actors felt the union should be concerned with actors and not be manager-led, ultimately resulting in the managers resigning to form The Society of West End Managers and with some radical actors forming The Actors' Union in 1907. However, by 1910 the Actors' Union had ceased operations and the managers rejoined the AA. This suggests that despite differing opinions regarding artistic output on stage or differing roles within the profession, the acting community believed it fared better when it united rather than segmented itself.

4.3. The National Theatre

At the same time as actors united, discussion of the formation of a national theatre began to re-surface. The mission to establish the National Theatre has no distinct genesis and academics highlight various moments in theatre history as the beginning of the movement. In *Scheme & Estimates for a National Theatre* (known as the Blue Book), collated in 1904 and published in 1908, William Archer and Harley Granville Barker produced a detailed plan of how a national theatre could operate from a managerial perspective.²⁴ However, Davis indicates that an 1885 document proposed a scheme of operating a theatre along similar lines to the Comédie Française whereby a theatre is dedicated to a specific nationally prestigious playwright (in the Comédie Française's case – Molière (1622-1673), in the UK – Shakespeare).²⁵ Kirsten Guest highlights the

²² 'The Actors' Association', *Era*, 7 February 1891, p. 12.

²³ 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 2 May 1891, p. 10.

²⁴ The scheme included: details of the costs of potential sites and buildings, the constitution of trustees, the salaries of general staff and performers, specimen seasons, expenses for front of house and backstage, the layout of example auditoriums, the possibility of an attached dramatic training school, and even how to wind up in case of failure. In such details the scheme was thoroughly researched as Archer and Barker consulted with industry professionals to ensure its accuracy (*Scheme & Estimates for a National Theatre* (New York: Duffield, 1908)).

²⁵ Davis, (2000), p. 233; 'Scheme for the Establishment of a National Theatre (Somewhat Similar to the "Comédie-Française") by the Formation of a National Dramatic Institute from Amongst

influence of Matthew Arnold in inspiring the future rhetoric on the cultural need for a national theatre. In ‘The French Play in London’ in the *Nineteenth Century* (1879) he suggested that, in an age of imperialism, a national theatre would send a message to the continent about British supremacy.²⁶ Following a visit of the Comédie Française to London in July 1893, *The Era* commented that ‘one cannot but wish that here in England such an institution were possible – a permanent, independent, national theatre, on the largest scale’.²⁷ Daniel Rosenthal quips that the ‘National Theatre story begins in 1564, with the birth of William Shakespeare’, but goes on to write that the purchase of Shakespeare’s birthplace in Stratford-on-Avon in 1847 was the impetus for serious discussion into creating a theatre that would serve as a home to Shakespeare as the Comédie Française was a home to Molière.²⁸ There was, therefore, an emphasis on a national theatre being a tribute or memorial.

The basis of the National Theatre campaign was the belief that there could be no renaissance for UK drama with the economic constraints in a theatre-management system that relied on the ventures of individuals. Speculating on plays by unknown new dramatists, for example, was financially risky when individual managers were investing their own capital, and this resulted in a reliance on long runs and avoiding controversial new drama. The raising of land values and rents at the turn of the nineteenth century exacerbated the situation – the financial fate of Irving being indicative of the precarious nature of the business.²⁹ In September 1895, Forbes-Robertson went into management somewhat unwillingly: as an actor he had few anxieties and he had had the fortune to play with leading actors in good companies with no spells of unemployment. He explains in his autobiography,

Real and Influential Patrons of Dramatic Art and Literature, and Eminent Artistes Earning Their Livelihood Thereby’ (London, 1885).

²⁶ ‘Culture, Class, and Colonialism: the Struggle for an English National Theatre, 1879-1913’, in *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 11:2, pp. 281-300, DOI: 10.3366/jvc.2006.11.2.281; ‘The French Play in London’, in *Nineteenth Century*, later reprinted: *Irish Essays*, (London: Smith Elder, 1882).

²⁷ ‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 15 July 1893, p. 8.

²⁸ *The National Theatre Story* (London: Oberon Books, 2013), e-book, p. 31.

²⁹ From 1878, Irving had individual managerial and artistic control over the Lyceum, but by the end of the century his personal finances were not sufficient to continue to operate alone. Following the destruction of his scenery in a fire in his store rooms under Waterloo Bridge in 1898, he was forced to surrender the lease of the Lyceum in 1899 to a Limited Liability Company. However, the failure of the syndicate following the London County Council’s insistence on £20,000 worth of alterations (equivalent to £2,147,000 in 2018) in 1902 forced Irving to give up his London base to tour the provinces.

The very speculative and gambling nature of theatrical management was distasteful to me, and I knew that my own personal efforts as an actor would be considerably handicapped by all the extra labour and anxiety which management entails. On the other hand, several actors, younger than I, had taken up management very much earlier in their careers, and there was nothing for it but to take a theatre if I was to maintain my place. Though it is true that an ideal theatre would be that in which the manager did not act, the fact remains that all the ambitious work, all the higher standards of the Drama have been maintained by the much-abused actor-manager from the days of Shakespeare down to our own time.³⁰

A consideration of the first two years of Forbes-Robertson's management (as he negotiated his actor-management brand) and his experiences playing in experimental plays, reveal some of the difficulties that actor-managers faced when launching new plays and also illustrates why Forbes-Robertson would have supported the National Theatre movement.

4.3.1 Forbes-Robertson's Early Management

In his autobiography, Forbes-Robertson explained that his intentions during his first season of managing the Lyceum (in partnership with Frederick Harrison (1854-1926)) were to 'uphold the traditions of the theatre that Irving's thirty years of management had made famous and unique in the history of the British drama'.³¹ Irving had created a *de facto* national theatre during his tenure at the Lyceum, although still subject to the same perils of competition and profit as other theatre-managers, and Forbes-Robertson saw it as his duty to assume his mantle. However, the results of the managerial decisions that Forbes-Robertson made during his sub-lease indicate the tough lessons he learnt about profit-making in the theatre business.

For his first production as an actor-manager he chose *Romeo and Juliet*, which ran from 21 September until 21 December 1895, playing 79 performances. *Romeo and Juliet* was a safe choice; he knew his Romeo was successful as he had played it with both Modjeska and Anderson in the UK and the USA. It was also lucratively safe as he did not have to pay author royalties, and he had Campbell—a major theatre celebrity in her own right—as his leading lady. A London correspondent for the *Bolton Evening News* reported that the 'expenses have been enormous, and Mr. Forbes Robertson is not the first actor-manager who has discovered that a leading lady of Mrs. Patrick Campbell's attainments expects her money's worth'. Nonetheless, the journalist hedged that, 'with an average house of some 300 at each performance, Mr. Robertson finds

³⁰ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), pp. 164-165.

³¹ p. 162.

himself in possession of a net profit of over £7,000 [equivalent to £79,420 in 2018]'.³² The London correspondent for *The Dundee Advertiser* hailed the performance as 'the most marked Shakespearian revival of the year'.³³ Following this profitable safety net, he then ventured into more speculative forms of theatre.

Forbes-Robertson premiered Henry Arthur Jones's *Michael and His Lost Angel* (hereafter *Michael*) on 15 January 1896, but the run lasted only ten nights as neither the public or the critics responded well to the play. Jones advocated reform and elevation of the British drama in response to (what he perceived to be) an improvement in the tastes of playgoers between the 1880s and 1890s, and, in 1895, had published his compilation of essays on how this reform should be achieved. In the *Preface* he outlined three points that were central to his plight: he was fighting for a distinction to be drawn between the art of drama and popular amusement, for the freedom of the dramatist to represent all aspects of human life on stage, and for sane and wholesome, as opposed to pessimistic, plays.³⁴ Jones claimed that *Michael* had no genre, but its sub-heading – 'A New and Original Play of Modern English Life' – indicates the modern presentation he was striving for. The play follows the plight of Michael (Forbes-Robertson) – a clergyman who forces a girl to publicly confess her sins after she gives birth to an illegitimate child, but then he falls for the charms of a newcomer to his parish – Audrie. When he discovers that Audrie is not a widow and, in fact, has a living husband, Michael also confesses his sinful passions publicly. Venturing on a play by Jones, Forbes-Robertson was taking a gamble.

The play was controversial for the time as it dealt with the themes of chastity and 'fallen women', and also for its treatment of the Church.³⁵ Fitzmaurice explains that the Church objected because it included a scene staged below chancel steps during a service.³⁶ According to Russell Jackson, the 'controversy that *Michael and his Lost Angel* aroused might have kept it in good business for some time, and Jones felt betrayed by its withdrawal after ten nights'.³⁷ *The*

³² 'Our London Correspondent', *Bolton Evening News*, 16 December 1895, p. 4.

³³ 'From Our London Correspondent', *Dundee Advertiser*, 1 January 1896, p. 5.

³⁴ *The Renaissance of the English Drama: essays, lectures, and fragments relating to the modern English stage* (London and New York: Macmillan and Co., 1895), in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/stream/renaissanceofengl100joneuoft#page/n17/mode/2up>, pp. vii-ix.

³⁵ 'From Our London Correspondent', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 24 January 1896, p. 5.

³⁶ Fitzmaurice, p. 180.

³⁷ Russell Jackson, *Plays by Henry Arthur Jones* (Cambridge: UP, 1982), p. 11.

Scotsman termed the play ‘novel and daring’, the *London Evening Standard* said it was characterized by ‘[f]reshness and unconventionality’, and *The Sketch* called it ‘an interesting, daring piece, admirable in dialogue, and fine in study of character’.³⁸ However, the play was beset with troubles from the outset, the main issue being Campbell’s departure from the play days before the opening resulting in Marion Terry replacing her. Some claimed Campbell recognised that the play would not be successful or that she disliked the role of Audrie, whereas others pointed to disagreements between Campbell and Jones as explanations for her exit.³⁹ Additionally, some simply found the play boring – *MP* said it was ‘not dramatic, but a dismal, monotonous story, in which religion cuts a sorry figure’, and *The Sporting Times* said it was more like a sermon than a play.⁴⁰ ‘There is something decidedly regrettable about the sacrifice of so much work and so much money’, sympathised *The Leeds Mercury* after the management announced the play’s withdrawal, ‘but Mr. Henry Arthur Jones on the one hand, and Mr. Forbes-Robertson on the other, elected to make a daring experiment upon the public, and a daring experiment of any kind is always attended by risks’.⁴¹ Conversely, Shaw praised the play but blamed its failures on the absence of Campbell, to whom, he claimed, the part of Audrie was suited, and also on Forbes-Robertson for not presenting Michael in a more sympathetic light.⁴² Ultimately, according to Fitzmaurice, it was the financial backer, Bottomley, who insisted on ending the run.⁴³ Following this failed venture, Forbes-Robertson responded to a toast at the Playgoers’ Club annual dinner at the Criterion on 25 January by expressing his revulsion at the risky nature of the industry and expressing a hope that new forms of theatrical art would come to be appreciated by the public.⁴⁴

Following the failure and early withdrawal of *Michael*, Forbes-Robertson had to prepare his next play expeditiously. He commissioned John Davidson to translate into English François Coppée’s *Pour la Couronne*, which had been popular the previous year at the Odéon Theatre in

³⁸ ‘London Theatricals’, *Scotsman*, 16 January 1896, p. 5; ‘Lyceum Theatre’, *London Evening Standard*, 16 January 1896, p. 3; and ‘Michael and his Lost Angel’, *Sketch*, 22 January 1896, p. 2.

³⁹ ‘Our London Letter’, *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 11 January 1896, p. 2; and ‘From London Town’, *Social Review (Dublin)*, 11 January 1896, p. 9.

⁴⁰ ‘Lyceum Theatre’, *Morning Post*, 16 January 1896, p. 3; and ‘Things Theatrical’, *Sporting Times*, 18 January 1896, p. 3.

⁴¹ ‘From Our London Correspondent’, *Leeds Mercury*, 24 January 1896, p. 5.

⁴² ‘Michael and His Lost Angel’, in *Dramatic opinions [...]* pp. 309-326.

⁴³ p. 180.

⁴⁴ ‘Spirit of the News’, *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd’s List*, 27 January 1896, p. 3.

Paris. *For the Crown* is an old-world romance set in the Balkans where Constantine Brancomir (Forbes-Robertson) is a martyr of patriotism. He kills his own father to prevent him committing the treason of allowing the Turks passage into their country, but is then accused by the mob of committing the treachery he sought to prevent. Militza (Campbell) – a slave girl who knows the truth – kills him out of mercy before killing herself. Archer maintained that Coppée had ‘invented, or stumbled upon, one of the finest plots in existence’.⁴⁵ Despite the rapidity with which the play had to be rehearsed and mounted, which included Forbes-Robertson making a trip to Europe in search of inspiration for fifteenth-century Roumania, he opened the play on 27 February 1896 to glowing reviews.⁴⁶ ‘First and foremost in the list of art we must place Forbes Robertson. He has never done anything better: but the question is, has he ever had such a chance?’ questioned the *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*. The journalist claimed that this role saw Forbes-Robertson elevate himself to a finer form of art, and, on of his rendition of Constantine’s monologue after he has killed his father, argues that it would ‘be remembered as one of the finest things in impassioned elocution that the very oldest playgoer has ever heard’.⁴⁷ For all that the play was successful in Paris, it was never a safe bet – Coppée’s themes were controversial as he addressed contemporary social flaws.⁴⁸ Additionally, the translation was new and the tastes of Parisian audiences would frequently differ from those in London. Critics still referred to *For the Crown* as an experiment, but, unlike *Michael*, it was a gamble that paid off, not only financially, but also in cementing Forbes-Robertson’s public image as a true artist.⁴⁹

Forbes-Robertson’s successful play drew ‘a susceptible, intelligent, and highly critical audience’ as well as ‘fashionable’ audiences who did not want the evening’s entertainment to interfere with their dining arrangements.⁵⁰ From 14 March, Forbes-Robertson played a one-act fantasy called *The Shades of Night* by Robert Marshall (1863-1910) as a front piece to the main attraction so that those who chose to arrive late did not miss the main entertainment. W. Moy

⁴⁵ ‘For the Crown’, in *The Theatrical ‘World’ of 1896* (London: Walter Scott, 1897), in *Internet Archive* https://archive.org/stream/theatrical189600archuoft/theatrical189600archuoft_djvu.txt, pp. 59-67, p. 59.

⁴⁶ ‘Our London Letter’, *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 8 February 1896, p. 4.

⁴⁷ “‘For the Crown,’ at the Lyceum”, *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 28 February 1896, p. 3.

⁴⁸ ‘The New Play at the Lyceum’, *Sketch*, 26 February 1896, p. 19.

⁴⁹ ‘London Letter’, *Western Daily Press*, 16 March 1896, p. 8; ‘The Theatre’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 February 1896, p. 2.

⁵⁰ “‘For the Crown,’ at the Lyceum”, *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 28 February 1896, p. 3.

Thomas praised this choice in *The Graphic* and said that Forbes-Robertson could have selected any simple farce, like most managers would do, but he instead chose ‘to give us an original and decidedly clever little piece by an author who is new to the stage’.⁵¹ Thus, another experimental piece of theatre proved successful for Forbes-Robertson’s management.

Despite having commissioned the translation of the play for his own use, Forbes-Robertson sold the provincial rights of *For the Crown* to Otho Stuart (1863-1930). The Memorandum of Agreement between Forbes-Robertson/Harrison and Stuart gave Stuart the right to ‘the entire Provincial Rights in the United Kingdom ‘except the Grand Theatre Islington, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Dublin, Newcastle, Leeds, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Brighton and Bristol and any town or village within four miles of any of the aforesaid towns’. These were the places where Forbes-Robertson was likely to perform at some point so he was effectively reserving them for himself and preventing a clash of celebrity. In exchange for the rights, Stuart was to pay Forbes-Robertson/Harrison 5% when weekly receipts were under £150, 7.5% for weekly receipts between £150 and £300, and 10% when weekly receipts exceeded £300. The eighth point of the agreement specified that in all publicity material for performances, Stuart should advertise that the production was ‘by arrangement with Mr. Forbes Robertson and Mr. Frederick Harrison’.⁵² The parties signed the agreement on 16 March 1896 and, as evidenced by the advert in *The Era* (Fig 4.1), he was playing in Cheltenham by 11 April 1896. Stuart could perform the play around the country while Forbes-Robertson simultaneously played it at the Lyceum which expanded the commercial potential of the venture. Additionally, through stamping his brand on the play, Forbes-Robertson ensured that, even when he was not performing in it, his name could provide publicity.

⁵¹ ‘The Shades of Night’, *Graphic*, 21 March 1896, p. 14.

⁵² M&M, BTC (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO).

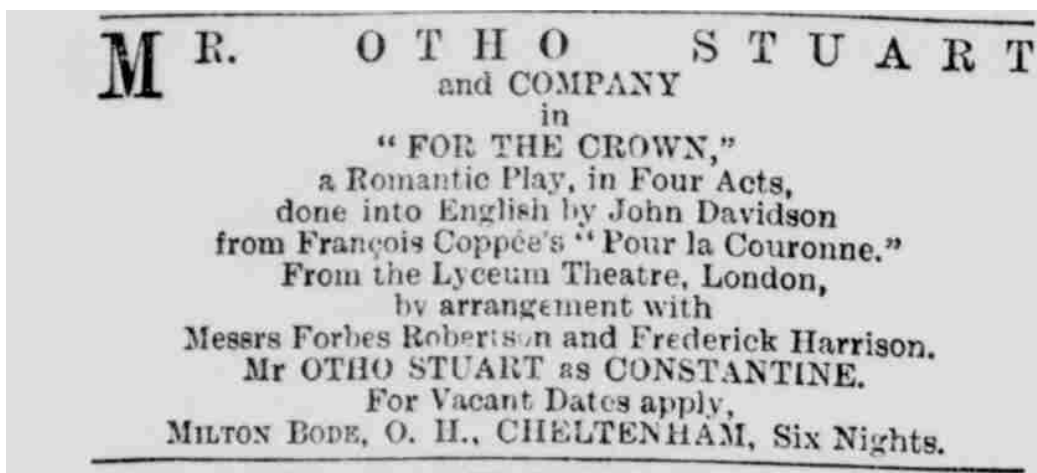


Fig 4.1: Advert for Otho Stuart's *For the Crown* (1896).⁵³

For the Crown continued to draw audiences at the Lyceum until its final performance on 30 May (after 94 performances) and four days later *Magda* opened in its place. The play is a translation by Louis Napoleon Parker from the German play *Heimat* (Home) by Hermann Sudermann – another contemporary dramatist sometimes compared to Ibsen. In the story, Magda (Campbell), having refused to marry the man chosen for her by her father, is forced to leave his home in disgrace. In her exile she becomes a great singer and, seventeen years later, she returns to her home with her illegitimate child. Her father demands that she marry the father of her child, but the man makes it a condition that the child's existence must be a secret, so she refuses. Furious, the father points a gun at her, but learning that she has had more than one lover, he shoots himself.

Unlike *Michael* and *For the Crown*, this was not the first showing of *Magda* in London. Eleonora Duse (1858-1924) and Sarah Bernhardt, the leading actresses of Italy and France (respectively), both gave their renditions of the role in June 1895 (Duse's in Italian at Drury Lane, and Bernhardt's in French at Daly's Theatre) but, according to *The Freeman's Journal*, neither performer made a particularly favourable impression 'except among the Ibsen worshippers, who regard Sudermann as a worthy imitator of the "Master."⁵⁴ The *Morning Post* concluded that Sudermann had intended to demonstrate the conflict between the 'New Women' and old morality, 'but he has succeeded only in crushing his New Woman in the mill of conventions, which, to an unbiased public, are neither moral nor real, but fantastic and

⁵³ 'Companies on Tour', *Era*, 11 April 1896, p. 3.

⁵⁴ 'London Correspondence', *Freeman's Journal*, 5 June 1896, p. 5.

grotesque'.⁵⁵ Without a compelling storyline and with a history of unenthusiastic audience reception, the main attribute of the play was that it offered a challenging opportunity for an actress. Shaw was particularly critical of Campbell's *Magda*:

if the managers are going in for Sudermann and Ibsen, and serious work generally, then in the name of common sense let them show us something more of the people who have proved themselves able to handle such work, and keep their pretty dolls for doll's work.⁵⁶

Reviews criticised Forbes-Robertson for casting himself in the meagre role of Pastor Hefferdingh, with *The Social Review* (Dublin) opining that such modesty should be 'condemned'.⁵⁷ Forbes-Robertson was clearly gifting the role of *Magda* to Campbell in an attempt to be the type of manager who encouraged the ambitions of others and could let other stars take the limelight. However, *The Northern Whig* argued that he ought to learn 'that he himself, and not another, is the person whom the playgoer wishes to see suited with a part'.⁵⁸ The play was another failed experiment and he withdrew it on 19 June, replacing it with a revival of Richard Sheridan's (1751-1816) *The School for Scandal* the next day.

London's Drury Lane first presented *The School for Scandal* – a satire of upper-class manners and behaviour – on 8 May 1777. '*The School for Scandal* is a fine comedy, and one which always commands a certain degree of popularity whenever it is fairly well played', the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* claimed, '[b]ut we hardly imagine it was included in the programme with which Mr. Forbes-Robertson proposed to occupy his season at the Lyceum'.⁵⁹ Although it was a popular drama (Shaw referred to it as a 'modern classic') and audiences generally received it well, critics complained that it had been overplayed. This suggests that Forbes-Robertson revived it to subsidise for the losses incurred from staging *Magda* and *Michael*, and as a guaranteed success to end the season on (the play ended its run on 24 July).⁶⁰ Shaw's

⁵⁵ 'Lyceum Theatre', *Morning Post*, 4 June 1896, p. 6.

⁵⁶ 'The New *Magda* and the New Cyprienne', in *Dramatic Opinions* [...] pp. 4-11, p. 4.

⁵⁷ 'The Social Review', *The Social Review (Dublin)*, 13 June 1896, p. 8. See also, The Stroller, "'Magda" At The Lyceum Theatre', *Sporting Life*, 6 June 1896, p. 8; and 'Our London Correspondent', *Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle*, 13 June 1896, p. 3.

⁵⁸ 'Music and the Drama', *Northern Whig*, 22 June 1896, p. 6.

⁵⁹ 'Lyceum Theatre', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 27 June 1896, p. 25.

⁶⁰ 'The Second Dating of Sheridan', in *Dramatic Opinions* [...] pp. 22-28, p. 23; "'The School for Scandal" At The Lyceum', *Sketch*, 24 June 1896, p. 343.

review observed that, while these failed plays may have cost him financially, his popularity with his public had not waned.⁶¹

To end his first full season as manager and to mark the end of his tenancy of the Lyceum, on 25 July the company played a mixed bill featuring scenes from *King Henry VIII*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *For The Crown*, *Magda*, and *The School for Scandal*. In a closing speech to his patrons, Forbes-Robertson announced his plans to tour *For The Crown* across the country (there had been rumours that he would take a lease of another London theatre or even that he was having a theatre built for him).⁶² The *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* commented that the financial result of the enterprise was unknown, but ‘in one short year it is an unmistakable triumph to have established a *répertoire* of such varied interest and such solid worth’.⁶³ A few days earlier, the same newspaper had been less sympathetic, suggesting that a commitment to reviving Shakespearian plays would have had improved results.⁶⁴

It may be that, as an inexperienced manager, Forbes-Robertson was not always adept at identifying plays with financial potential. His tour of *For The Crown* continued successfully, but, after he read the new drama – *Nelson’s Enchantress* – in January 1897, he was so convinced it would be successful on stage that he curtailed the tour and again opened himself up to the risks of staging experimental drama in the commercial theatre.⁶⁵ The play, which opened on 11 February 1897 at The Avenue Theatre, focused on the life of Lady Emma Hamilton (Campbell) and her seduction of Lord Nelson (Forbes-Robertson), and sought to tap into both interest in the dramatic presentation of Emma as a fallen woman and patriotic interest in the naval hero. Additionally, speculation in the newspapers about the true identity of the authoress generated gossip for the play, for, although *Nelson’s Enchantress* was written under the pseudonym of Mr. Risden Home, the press reported that it was actually written by a woman.⁶⁶

⁶¹ ‘The Second Dating of Sheridan’, in *Dramatic Opinions* [...] pp. 22-28, p. 28.

⁶² ‘Lyceum Theatre’, *London Evening Standard*, 27 July 1896, p. 4; and ‘Merry-Go-Round’, *London and Provincial Entr’acte*, 1 August 1896, p. 4.

⁶³ ‘Lyceum Theatre’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 1 August 1896, p. 24.

⁶⁴ ‘Lyceum Theatre’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 27 June 1896, p. 25.

⁶⁵ ‘Music and the Drama’, *Glasgow Herald*, 25 January 1897, p. 9.

⁶⁶ *The Glasgow Herald* and *EEN* both forwarded the idea that Forbes-Robertson’s sister Frances had written the play, but two weeks later *The Glasgow Herald* changed their claim to a Miss Hornby, daughter of Admiral Sir Geoffrey Hornby. The authoress was eventually identified as a Mrs. De Lacy Lacy who, according to Shaw, was ‘the daughter of an admiral who was

The play gained further notoriety when Admiral Edward Field (1828-1912), then MP for Eastbourne, objected to the play in the House of Commons and pressed the Home Secretary, Matthew White Ridley (1842-1904), for its withdrawal on the grounds that Nelson was being ‘held up to public contempt’.⁶⁷ In newspaper interviews, Forbes-Robertson denied any disrespect towards the memory of Nelson, arguing that the play was merely dealing with an aspect of his life that some preferred to ignore. He ironically suggested that the Admiral’s objection was possibly related to the dying wish of Nelson (as expressed on stage) for his country to take care of Lady Hamilton:

Perhaps Admiral Field thinks that those lines spoken with Nelson’s last breath imply disgrace to the Government of the time. I know, you know, and we all know, that the men who constituted the Government then were such errant rascals that while the King’s mistresses were kept, and fed, and tenderly cared for, Lady Hamilton, the beloved of one whose last grand victory – bought with his life’s blood – had saved the nation, was allowed to languish and to perish.⁶⁸

The House of Commons did not interfere with the licensing of the play and its run continued. However, despite the general interest in the play and praise for the performers, reviews considered the dialogue monotonous and criticised the episodic dramatic structure, and it lasted for only 40 performances (the final performance was on 22 March).⁶⁹

Forbes-Robertson returned to his provincial tour, adding *Othello* to his repertoire at the Theatre Royal, Manchester on 30 April 1897. In September he produced *Hamlet* at the Lyceum and, from then on, he could rely on returning to it for commercial success. During his first two years in management, Forbes-Robertson had demonstrated his commitment to a renaissance in English drama; he had produced plays that had never been performed before, plays by foreign dramatists that had never been acted in English before, plays by new dramatists (including women), plays with controversial themes, and plays featuring national icons. The precarious

midshipman to Hardy, who was captain to Nelson’ (‘Music and the Drama’, *Glasgow Herald*, 25 January 1897, p. 9; ‘Today’s London Letter’, *EEN*, 25 January 1897, p. 2; and ‘Dramatic and Musical’, *Glasgow Herald*, 13 February 1897, p. 7; ‘For England, Home and Beauty’, in *Dramatic Opinions* [...] pp. 145-150, p. 145).

⁶⁷ *Hansard* HC Deb. vol. 46 cols.714-5, 18 February 1897, available from: <https://www.parliament.uk/>, [accessed 14 May 2018].

⁶⁸ ‘Gossip of the Day’, *Portsmouth Evening News*, 18 February 1897, p. 2. See also, ‘Mr Forbes Robertson and Nelson’s Memory’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 18 February 1897, p. 4.

⁶⁹ ‘Avenue Theatre’, *London Evening Standard*, 12 February 1897, p. 5; ‘The Sainted Emma’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 February 1897, p. 2; and ‘The Playhouses’, *Illustrated London News*, 20 February 1897, p. 3.

nature of playing new drama was now apparent to him, but this did not necessarily prevent him from launching cutting-edge drama in the future – he was, though, more cautious in how he approached new drama. This is best demonstrated in his productions of Shaw’s plays, which also indicate why he would have been a likely supporter for a national theatre.

4.3.2 *Playing Shaw*

The week after seeing Forbes-Robertson and Campbell in *Nelson’s Enchantress*, Shaw approached them to play his new drama, *The Devil’s Disciple*.⁷⁰ Set in revolutionary US, the story follows Dick Dudgeon, originally an outcast of society, who, in an act of self-sacrifice puts himself in the place of the local minister when British soldiers try to arrest and hang him. Shaw was already in the process of writing *Caesar and Cleopatra* with them in mind for the title characters (although it would not receive its world premiere production until 30 October 1906 in New York and its London premier until 25 November 1907) and, according to Jesse M. Hellmann, it was seeing *Nelson’s Enchantress* that inspired him to write *Pygmalion and Galatea* (although he did not actually write it until 1912 and it did not appear on stage in Vienna until 1913 and in London in 1914). On 8 September 1897, Shaw wrote to Ellen Terry about Forbes-Robertson and Campbell:

I would teach that rapscaillionly flower girl of his something. *Caesar and Cleopatra* has been driven clean out of my head by a play I want to write for them in which he shall be a west end gentleman and she an east end dona in an apron and three orange and red ostrich feathers[.]⁷¹

In an article in *The Play Pictorial*, Shaw claimed that he wrote *Caesar and Cleopatra* for Forbes-Robertson

because he is the classic actor of our day, and had a right to require such a service from me. [...] Without him [it] would not have been written; for no man writes a play without any reference to the possibility of a performance.

Shaw explained in the article that the parts he wrote for Forbes-Robertson were heroes identifiable to a contemporary audience: ‘It is no use now going on with heroes who are no longer really heroic to us. [...] [T]he demand now is for heroes in whom we can recognise our

⁷⁰ Jesse M. Hellman, ‘Lady Hamilton, *Nelson’s Enchantress*, and the Creation of Pygmalion’, in *The Journal of Bernard Shaw Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 2, 2015, pp. 213-237, p. 216.

⁷¹ *Ellen Terry and Bernard Shaw: A Correspondence* (New York: Putnam, 1932), p. 186, quoted in Hellman, p. 216.

own humanity'.⁷² Shaw wrote his plays for a modern audience and he viewed Forbes-Robertson as the ideal performer to convey his message.

At this stage, however, Forbes-Robertson had become somewhat more risk-averse. Correspondence between Shaw and Ian Robertson (in his capacity as Forbes-Robertson's stage manager) illustrates that negotiations between them on the subject of Forbes-Robertson's producing *The Devil's Disciple* were erratic. On 30 April 1900, the situation was not resolved and Shaw wrote:

The Devil's Disciple is still available; but the question is, how to nail up J.F.R. in such a manner as to create some sort of certainty that he will produce it. A play of mine is to him only a pis aller: if he can find any alternatives, however unpromising, from Moonlight Blossoms and Nelsons to Macbeths, he will embrace them with a sigh of relief and leave me with my market spoiled. Now it will be always possible to find alternatives: in fact, I can find a few myself, all congenial, gentlemanly, and certain to fail. He will never be in a better position to venture on a play of mine than he has been for the last two or three years; so I take his present reluctant resolution to swallow the horrors of the Devil's Disciple as a mere act of desperation, the result of ill health and discouragement. ... [Can] you seriously ask me, after my experience of him, to tie the play up for him in any way?

Let us wait until Autumn; and then, if I have not disposed of the play otherwise, and if he has not got another play after his own heart, I daresay we can settle the matter without any difficulty. In the meantime he will be all the happier, and consequently the more thoroughly and rapidly convalescent, for feeling there is still a chance of escape.⁷³

Despite Shaw's hesitations, Forbes-Robertson took *The Devil's Disciple* on his provincial tour, along with *Hamlet*, *Othello*, and *Carrots* (a one-act play by Jules Renard (1864-1910) and adapted by Alfred Sutro (1863-1933)). Starting on 4 September 1900 in Leeds, the tour included a London performance at The Coronet at Notting Hill Gate on 7 September 1900. In 1903 there was discussion between Elliott and Shaw about reproducing *The Devil's Disciple*, but Shaw wrote to her saying,

I shall always do my best to prevent HIM [Forbes-Robertson] from producing the D's D in London, because I have no faith in it financially. If he were a beginner at leading business, needing an advertisement + a discussion above all things, I should say risk it and hang the expense. But he is past all that: Dick Dudgeon cannot add to the reputation of our only Hamlet.⁷⁴

⁷² 'Bernard Shaw and the Heroic Actor', *Play Pictorial*, Vol. X, October 1907, p. 110.

⁷³ BL Manuscripts, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers, Vol. VII, Add MS 62700.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 17th June 1903.

This would suggest that, in Shaw's view, by 1903 Forbes-Robertson's celebrity profile was sealed – built on his prowess as Hamlet, and that he suspected that the fictive self of Dick was too much of a digression from the persona of Hamlet to be appreciated together.

The next Shaw/Forbes-Robertson venture would not materialise until seven years later when Forbes-Robertson played in *Caesar and Cleopatra*. The first performance was in the US in his Spring tour of 1907 followed by performances in Bristol and Manchester in November 1907.⁷⁵ It did not open in London until 25 November 1907 when he performed at the Savoy Theatre under the management of Barker and Vedrenne – a union that evolved following the completion of *Schemes and Estimates* when they collaborated in a repertory theatre scheme. From October 1904 until June 1907, they operated out of the Court Theatre, giving 946 performances of 32 plays by 17 dramatists, including six plays by Shaw. A play at the Court would be given an initial matinee: if it was successful it would return for an evening run of approximately two weeks, if not then it would play six performances then be withdrawn.⁷⁶ In stark opposition to commercial theatres, Barker and Vedrenne limited even the run of successful plays to make way for new plays. According to James Woodfield, the most notable feature of the Court, in comparison to other theatres, was its absence of a celebrity system.⁷⁷ In *Schemes and Estimates*, Archer and Barker explicitly indicated that 'such an institution [as a national theatre] can not hope, and does not desire, to keep within its limits the born 'star,' the man or woman who is obviously capable of obtaining world-wide renown or notoriety'.⁷⁸ That is not to say that stage stars did not perform at the Court Theatre – Woodfield instances Ellen Terry and Campbell as having accepted parts despite relatively low salaries, but the emphasis was on finding competent players for even minor parts. He explains that true artists 'felt the sacrifices worthwhile to work with a producer who drew out their best acting powers and was dedicated to art for its own sake, and not for the sake of what cash profit it might bring'.⁷⁹ Barker recalled a story about a time when he had influenza and was unable to perform in the lead role he was supposed to be playing

⁷⁵ The play was performed at the Prince's Theatre in Bristol on 11th and 12th November with the funds of the first night being in aid of a local poor Jewish community ('Mr. Forbes Robertson's Visit', *Horfield and Bishopston Record*, 16 November 1907, p.3), followed by three nights at the Theatre Royal, Manchester from 18th November.

⁷⁶ Rosenthal, p. 50.

⁷⁷ *English Theatre in Transition, English Theatre in Transition, 1881-1914* (London and New York: Routledge, 1984), p. 80

⁷⁸ Archer, p. 34.

⁷⁹ p. 83.

and so a notice explaining his absence was pinned in the box-office. The money-taker had reported that one audience member had been unaware of who this 'Barker' was, and was only concerned that *someone* should play the role.⁸⁰ Thus, a system of celebrity was somewhat absent from this experimental form of theatre that emphasised the play rather than the star.

However, the move of the Vedrenne-Barker partnership from the Court to the Savoy Theatre on 16 September 1907 illustrated that the scheme could not easily be replicated on a larger scale. The Court was an intimate, comfortable theatre with 670 seats, whereas the more centrally located Savoy Theatre seated 1,070. While the partnership continued along the same artistic vision that was a success at the Court, it was a financial fiasco. Vedrenne and Barker had each invested £1,000 and Shaw £2,000 in the venture (equivalent to £103,100 and £207,800 in 2018), but by the end of the tenancy on 14 March 1908 they were almost bankrupt.⁸¹ While Vedrenne was willing to allow successful plays to run for a longer period, Barker was unwilling to succumb to the strategies of the commercial theatre and the partnership foundered. The case of Forbes-Robertson's *Caesar and Cleopatra* illustrates that Vedrenne and Barker may have intended to remove the star element from productions, but newspaper commentary shows that celebrity was a prevailing facet of the marketing and narrative around the production.

Shaw had begun writing the play, which recounts Caesar's arrival in Egypt and meeting the 16-year-old Cleopatra, in 1897, and correspondence between the Forbes-Robertsons and Shaw (although only Shaw's letters are available) captures the difficulties and concerns involved with mounting such a production. Forbes-Robertson's reticence in launching the play suggests that, although he was enthusiastic about encouraging new forms of drama, after the failures he had endured in his first years of management he was more careful about mitigating any potential losses. In letters dated 21 and 22 December 1903, Shaw wrote to Forbes-Robertson with suggestions as to how the play should be handled:

Caesar, of course, will be in the big repertory of the future; and you ought to create him. [...] Caesar is not a cheap venture. [...] I think you had better sample it at the Stage Society before committing yourself or me any further.⁸²

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 83.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

⁸² Add MS 62700, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers, Vol. VII, BL.

The Stage Society was a theatre society for new and experimental drama that pre-dated and inspired the Vedrenne-Barker management; Shaw was suggesting staging a small-scale version of the play at the Stage Society to test audience's responses before investing heavily in it.

In 1905 the question of staging *Caesar and Cleopatra* during Forbes-Robertson's season at the Scala came to the fore. Shaw's letter (dated 29 June 1905) shows that the pair could not coordinate their schedules for rehearsals, which Shaw insisted on being involved with, and they did not have the right cast available. 'I know I can get a magnificent performance out of it if only I can get a fair chance at it,' Shaw wrote, '[I]et's put it off to next year'.⁸³ The correspondence the following summer indicates that preparations were being made ahead of the New York premier of the production. Shaw's suggestions on 15 July 1906 demonstrate the level of detail involved in mounting a Shaw-production:

The Roman soldiers need have only one greave, on the right knee. That would be correct, and cheaper. The tunics in Caesar's time came below the knee, as breeches were not worn. There is authority for the sword being either left or right. The soldiers' helmets were leather.⁸⁴

Following the eventual opening at the Savoy, Shaw wrote to Elliott with further advice and stage directions in a letter dated 27 November 1907.

Caesar and Cleopatra ran at the Savoy for four weeks to a mixed reception. Shaw's aim was to present a Caesar that was the antithesis of Shakespeare's. The characters spoke in a colloquial East End London dialect (instead of blank verse) with deliberate anachronisms that served as commentary on the social conditions of turn-of-the-century Britain. For instance, the press compared Cleopatra to a 'New Woman', as captured in the cartoon from the *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News* (Fig 4.2), and a suffragette Cleopatra perplexed some critics (as the caption reads in the cartoon, 'Scene 2 Treated Irreverently'). This view was also probably the result of Elliott's politicised persona – as a supporter of women's rights – being projected onto the character. The reviews generally praised the scenery and acting, but some found the play boring with the *London Daily News* declaring it 'dull and often downright foolish'.⁸⁵ As had been

⁸³ *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

⁸⁵ 'Caesar & Cleopatra', *London Daily News*, 26 November 1907, p. 7.; see also The Prompter, 'P.I.P. Playgoer', *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 7 December 1907, p. 380; and 'G.B.S', *Tatler*, 4 December 1907, p. 19.

the case with *Nelson's Enchantress*, some disliked the satiric representation of historical characters, and the *Morning Post's* reviewer objected to Shaw's misrepresentation of history.⁸⁶ The *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer* correspondent reported that, at the Savoy's opening performance, the audience's reception was 'none too cordial', whereas *Sporting Life* reported that 'the reception was entirely cordial' and called the play 'a vastly entertaining piece of work, bearing throughout the imprint of Mr Shaw's peculiar genius'.⁸⁷ The disparities between the reports are probably the result of Shaw's play being without precedent and therefore difficult to gauge.

⁸⁶ 'Mr. G. Bernard Shaw's New Play', *Morning Post*, 26 November 1907, p. 7.

⁸⁷ 'Mr. G. Bernard Shaw's "Caesar and Cleopatra"', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 26 November 1907, p. 6; "'Caesar and Cleopatra" At the Savoy', *Sporting Life*, 26 November 1907, p. 5.



Fig 4.2: Cartoon of Cleopatra (Elliott) depicted as a 'New Woman' (1907).⁸⁸

Shaw believed that the press did not appreciate the play adequately because of their prejudice against him as a playwright. He expressed his grievances in a letter to Elliott on 4 December 1907:

It requires a deliberate and conscious effort of reason not to be furiously disgusted with the Public and Press over Caesar. They have not seen acting like that for Lord knows how many years – indeed most of them have never seen anything like it at all. And instead of

⁸⁸ 'Caesar and Cleopatra At The Savoy Theatre', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 7 December 1907, p. 574.

appreciating it, they positively grumble at it. [...] I am sorry now that it was not possible to produce the play anonymously: for it is plain that the critics let their preconceived ideas of me get between themselves and the acting. [...] What we are doing is to build up a new play-going public, consisting for the most part of people who never troubled about the theatre at all before, and who are still very far from having formed a solid habit of play-going. The critics do not belong to this new set at all, they always hated the new stuff, even when they were trying their hardest to rise intellectually to the occasion.⁸⁹

It would appear that, despite Barker's belief in a theatrical system that promoted the play and not the player, it was the stars, not the play or playwright, that attracted this audience. London reviewers welcomed the presence of Forbes-Robertson and Elliott (they had been absent from London stages since November 1905 when they played in Madeline Lucette Ryley's *Mrs. Grundy* at the Scala Theatre) and this appearance was hailed as a glorious return to the capital. The *Pall Mall Gazette* lauded their return and expressed regret at their absence:

There is nothing else like them on our stage at present; and we are sure we are only voicing the feeling of thousands when we express the hope that, now that London has got Mr. Forbes Robertson once again, she will keep him to herself a little more than has been the case of late years.

The writer continues to illustrate that, in this case, the actors were more of a draw for the audience than the play: 'While the desire of the public to see these performers again will doubtless draw many to the Savoy Theatre, the curiosity to see Mr. Bernard Shaw's "history in four acts" should also play its part in filling the house'.⁹⁰ The *Penny Illustrated Paper* suggested that his reappearance was the only inducement to attend and that 'one would wish that he had made his re-appearance in a play more likely to appeal to his hundreds of thousands of admirers than is "Caesar and Cleopatra."'.⁹¹ On 16 December 1907, the *Pall Mall Gazette* suggested that since the star couple had made no announcements to play in London in the near future, then playgoers should see them at the Savoy. Thus, Barker's vision of a star-free theatre system that had been successful at the Court was proving difficult to replicate in a major theatre that required the draw of celebrity to fill the house.

Forbes-Robertson's two-year absence from the London stage did not diminish his celebrity and the press continued to highlight the suitability of his hallmark virtues (his 'musical voice, his quiet, dignified, convincing personality, and his air of forceful restraint') for this modern

⁸⁹ Add MS 62700, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers, Vol. VII, BL.

⁹⁰ 'Mr. Forbes Robertson's Reappearance', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 November 1907, p. 4.

⁹¹ The Prompter, 'P.I.P. Playgoer', *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 7 December 1907, p. 380.

performance as they had been for his Shakespearean roles and romantic roles throughout his career.⁹² In particular, *The Bystander* drew attention to how Forbes-Robertson's previous selves in different plays projected onto the character of Caesar to influence the interpretation of him:

[Shaw's] Caesar is a curiously interesting dramatic figure. We are interested in the trend of Hamlet's mind. We want to analyse his motives and to discover the main-springs of his actions. He is a very human creature, and it becomes of real moment to us to see into what dangers his leniency and clemency will lead him. [... Caesar's] personality is tinged with romance (Mr. Forbes Robertson's contribution to the rôle is very apparent here). At the moment when you think his Caesar is going to be most weak, he develops suddenly the greatest strength. This Caesar of Mr. Shaw's might have been, and probably was, written for Mr. Forbes Robertson. It is impossible to conceive any other actor in the rôle.

This comparison of the dramatic Caesar with the dramatic Hamlet demonstrates the afterlife of Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet animated through the character of Caesar and shows that, even when he attempted experimental drama, he could not disassociate from his celebrity with its conflation of manufactured and fictional selves.

It may also be that, by this point in his career, Forbes-Robertson had learned what his audience expected of him and his persona and the value of his celebrity brand. As discussed in the Introduction, during the first twenty years of his career the roles that had longer runs were his Shakespearean romantic lovers (for example, Lysander, Claudio, and Romeo), characters of classic tales or histories (for example, Leontes, Buckingham, and Lancelot in *King Arthur*), or middle-class type characters in modern comedies or domestic dramas.⁹³ The commercial failures of *Michael* and *Magda* may therefore have been the result of Forbes-Robertson's failure to recognise that the public were more likely to approve of a role that correlated with his already-established persona than one that clashed. *The Sketch's* correspondent hinted at this when s/he, ahead of the opening of *For The Crown*, observed that the play was a return to familiar territory for Forbes-Robertson:

Old-world romance spelt success for Mr. Forbes-Robertson when he undertook the management of the Lyceum with "Romeo and Juliet." Its successor, a semi-, some said a pseudo-psychological study in modern life, was a dismal failure. The young manager has

⁹² *Ibid*; see also 'Mr. Forbes Robertson's Reappearance', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 November 1907, p. 4.

⁹³ He played his social dramas mainly during his time with the Bancrofts: Lord Grossmere in Bulwer Lytton's *Money* (1880), Krux in T. W. Robertson's *School* (1880), Julian Beauclerc in Victorien Sardou's *Diplomacy* (1884), and also Captain Absolute in Richard Sheridan's Georgian comedy *The Rivals* (1887). He also played Dunstan Renshaw in Hare's production of Pinero's social drama *The Profligate* (1889).

returned to his first love, for to-morrow night he produces Mr. John Davidson's adaptation of M. François Coppée's romantic play, "Pour la Couronne."⁹⁴

The writer suggests that it was the theme of *Michael* (here so derided that the writer did not even name it) that was unsuited to Forbes-Robertson's company and therefore resulted in its failure. Similarly, in the *Morning Post*'s review of *The School for Scandal*, the reviewer complained that 'Mr. Forbes Robertson is too true to himself to be Joseph Surface. He remains a polished gentleman, untouched by the muddy fire of a law and wicked passion'.⁹⁵ The assertion from the first writer that he had 'returned to his first love' and the second's description of him as 'a polished gentleman' illustrates that the writers had expectations from a Forbes-Robertson performance based on his earlier roles which left him with little room for expansion or experimentation. However, by the time he came to perform Caesar he had learned that he needed to 'create Caesar', as Shaw had indicated, and add some of the Forbes-Robertson romanticism to the character to hallmark it as his own.

4.3.3 *The Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre Movement*

This chapter has demonstrated that there were actors, like Forbes-Robertson, who desired to play in experimental drama or tackle original roles, but were sceptical of the financial implications. On the approach to Forbes-Robertson's debut as Hamlet, American actor Hermann Vezin (1829-1910) wrote to the editor of *The Era*, asking

in the names of justice and common sense why is Mr Robertson compelled to take a theatre with all its worries and responsibilities before he can gratify his laudable ambition?

London is the only great capital in the world in which an actor must have the control of sufficient money to become a manager before he can assume leading place in his calling. We may rejoice that Mr Robertson can control 'such sum, or sums, as are expressed in the condition;' but supposing he could not, he would have to content himself in frittering away his abilities in inferior rôles.⁹⁶

This demonstrates the frustration of members of the theatre industry at the existing financial structures for mounting productions. In reality, Forbes-Robertson was only able to produce *Hamlet* because he had the good fortune of borrowing the theatre, scenery, and props from Irving,

⁹⁴ 'The New Play at the Lyceum', *Sketch*, 26 February 1896, p. 19.

⁹⁵ 'Theatrical and Musical Notes', *Morning Post*, 6 July 1896, p. 6.

⁹⁶ Hermann Vezin, 'A National Theatre', *Era*, 14 August 1897, p. 10.

and received the financial backing of Bottomley.⁹⁷ As Vezin articulates, without these advantages, he may never have had an opportunity to play Hamlet. This constituted the source of a mounting pressure for a national theatre from within the profession.

This frustration coincided with an offer from Richard Badger in 1903 and 1904 to initiate contributions towards a fund for a Shakespeare Memorial in London in the form of a monument. Forbes-Robertson, Tree, and Benson were on the committee for raising the funds and erecting the monument. On 19 May 1908, 3,000 people (including Forbes-Robertson) attended a meeting at the Lyceum under the presidency of the Earl of Lytton (1876-1947), where they decided that a national theatre would be a more fitting memorial to Shakespeare. Lytton's arguments centred around four points: firstly, that a memorial should be purposeful, secondly, that public enterprises (such as the British Museum and the Royal College of Music) benefitted the public, thirdly, that other European countries could already boast of their national theatres, and finally, that the advancement of the drama should not be left to commercial competition. The motion passed and Forbes-Robertson was included in a list of the members of a new committee merged from the Shakespeare Memorial Committee and the National Theatre representatives who would be responsible for drafting a scheme for a Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre (SMNT).⁹⁸ The design was that the opening of the SMNT could also coincide with the 1916 Tercentenary of Shakespeare's death.

At the end of the year the situation was optimistic and the press connected Forbes-Robertson's name with the project. The London correspondent for the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* announced that fundraising would begin in earnest after Christmas as numerous 'titled people and Mr Forbes-Robertson are amongst those who have the work on hand, and it may now at last make some progress'.⁹⁹ Forbes-Robertson's name therefore offered credibility to the cause and a recognisable brand with which to connect the theatre. In July 1909, Forbes-Robertson was a signatory to a petition sent to London County Council requesting for the allocation of a site for the SMNT.¹⁰⁰ Sir Carl Meyer's (1851-1922) donation of £70,000 (equivalent to £7,167,000 in 2018) successfully commenced the fundraising but, by April 1910, H. B. Irving complained in a

⁹⁷ Forbes-Robertson, (1925), p. 170. According to Percy Burton, this was the only occasion in which Bottomley made a profit out of a theatre investment (Thomas, p. 116).

⁹⁸ 'A National Theatre', *Era*, 23 May 1908, p. 14.

⁹⁹ 'Our London Letter', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 15 December 1908, p. 5.

¹⁰⁰ 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 10 July 1909, p. 14.

letter published in *The Era* that subscriptions were slow and questioned the practicability of the project.¹⁰¹ Fundraising efforts included a Memorial Ball at the Albert Hall on 20 June 1911 and a ‘Shakespeare’s England’ exhibition at Earl’s Court which ran for six months during 1912, but the lavish costs of both events resulted in little profit for the fund. In early 1914, the committee spent £50,000 (equivalent to £4,713,000 in 2018) on a site in Bloomsbury for the erection of a theatre, but the Executive Committee suspended activities at the outbreak of war. Operations resumed again in 1915 ahead of the Tercentenary once it became apparent that other countries would be hosting celebrations. The *Aberdeen Daily Journal* claimed that the idea of the celebrations was to ‘emphasise to the Germans that Great Britain claims the intellectual greatness of Shakespeare’, but there was little cohesion from the committee and there would be no national theatre in 1916.¹⁰² As discussed in Chapter 3, the Bloomsbury site was then put to use as the Shakespeare Hut for ANZAC soldiers for the remainder of the War.

S. R. Littlewood, writing for the *Pall Mall Gazette* in June 1916, was one critic who argued that the First World War was the time when the SMNT Committee should have been most active as the nation needed drama. He complained of the Committee’s stagnancy and suggested that it should acquire the Drury Lane Theatre during the summer season for National Theatre Shakespeare performances.¹⁰³ In response to the article on behalf of the National Theatre Committee, Forbes-Robertson argued that, during the amalgamation in 1908, members of the theatre committee made a commitment to the monument committee to provide a monument to Shakespeare, and the idea of a Drury Lane Shakespeare Season would not fulfil this obligation and therefore was not an option.¹⁰⁴ Littlewood opposed the claim that there was any financial obligation towards the monument committee given that, at the time of the amalgamation, they had contributed only £3,000 (equivalent to £307,700 in 2018) towards the fund whereas the theatre committee had since brought in £70,000 (equivalent to £4,662,000 in 2018). Littlewood dismissed Forbes-Robertson’s assertion that the amalgamation was a wise decision because, since then,

every spark of sincere and unofficial enthusiasm for the theatre [has been] adroitly quenched in favour of Tercentenary celebrations, land purchases, buildings, gardens,

¹⁰¹ ‘The National Theatre’, *Era*, 16 April 1910, p. 19.

¹⁰² ‘Shakespeare Celebrations To Go On’, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 18 October 1915, p. 5.

¹⁰³ S. R. Littlewood, ‘Our National Theatre’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 June 1916, p. 6.

¹⁰⁴ Johnston Forbes-Robertson, ‘National Theatre’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 June 1916, p. 4.

statues, balls, exhibitions, Shakespeare huts, anything else but the theatre. [...] In a word it is a case of £3,000 dominating £70,000 all the time.

He praised Forbes-Robertson and Martin-Harvey for keeping the theatre concept at the forefront but ‘with Sir Johnston’s beautifully eloquent farewell speech at Drury Lane still fresh in my memory, I feel a singular regret that he, too, should have given up the hope he himself so frequently expressed’.¹⁰⁵ By November of that year however, Littlewood was able to express his delight that Forbes-Robertson had changed his mind on the matter and was fully behind the Shakespeare Season proposal.¹⁰⁶ In August 1919, a joint committee of the SMNT and the Governors of the Memorial Theatre at Stratford held the annual Summer Shakespeare Festival at Stratford-on-Avon, with Forbes-Robertson as Chairman of the four-week event.

Rosenthal continues the narrative of the National Theatre after the War, describing how the Shakespeare Hut continued to rent the land and how, presumably, the SMNT committee invested the funds in a touring company under the direction of William Bridge-Adams (1889-1965). The SMNT ultimately sold the land in Bloomsbury in 1922 to the Rockefeller Trust for £52,000 (equivalent to £2,789,000 in 2018) and Archer resigned from the National Theatre Committee.¹⁰⁷ Forbes-Robertson maintained an interest in the project long after his retirement as Trustee of the Shakespeare Memorial Fund, which included presiding over a conference at the House of Commons on 25 November 1929 – at which point they had £90,000 (equivalent to £5,374,000 in 2018) but were still at a point where committees were drawing up schemes and looking to government subsidies for assistance.¹⁰⁸

As an advocate for the National Theatre, Forbes-Robertson projected his persona onto the project in the speeches he made during fundraising and campaigning. On 7 June 1910, Mr. and Mrs. Godfrey Baring (1871-1957, 1876-1834) hosted a meeting regarding the National Theatre plans at their home in Kensington.¹⁰⁹ Hare presided and Forbes-Robertson gave an address that

¹⁰⁵ S. R. Littlewood, ‘National Theatre’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 June 1916, p. 4.

¹⁰⁶ S. R. Littlewood, ‘The National Theatre at last’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 November 1916, p. 4.

¹⁰⁷ Rosenthal, p. 70.

¹⁰⁸ ‘National Theatre Conference’, *Era*, 27 November 1929, p. 4.

¹⁰⁹ Godfrey Baring was a Liberal politician who had recently lost his House of Commons seat as MP for the Isle of Wight, but in 1911 would win the seat for Barnstaple. Hosting the National Theatre meeting may therefore have been an opportunity for him to network with some of London’s society personalities.

was reproduced in *The Era*. In the speech, partially reproduced below, aspects of Forbes-Robertson's persona can be identified as transferring to the National Theatre project:

The Statue Committee were particularly anxious that the Theatre Committee should be in the movement to erect some lasting memorial to William Shakespeare. It was incumbent on London to erect some beautiful edifice – Heaven knows such a building was wanted in London. Something that would make foreigners say: 'Here is a beautiful theatre'; something to make the man in the street say: 'What is this drama?' The objectors to their enthusiasm said: 'You can't start like that – Molière memorial is sanctified by age.' Another says: 'We must feel our way – we must begin in a humble way.' To talk about beginning in a humble way was ridiculous. They were committed to a monument. [...] He had just come from America, which was going ahead in a most extraordinary way. His words had come true, that Americans would have a National Theatre before the English had. [...] The New Theatre in New York] was the most beautiful and complete temple in the world. [...] He desired to see in London a national theatre which should be a fitting monument to Shakespeare as well. (Cheers) It should be subsidised, so that they could produce those plays which appealed to the educated minority – plays which no manager could afford to produce – and from which appreciative audiences derived, at any rate, some good. (Cheers.) New York, which in a way was our own child, was setting us an example. It was a question of art, and they must see that the drama was as well protected as were music and painting by their representative academies. (Hear, hear.) A school should be attached to the national theatre. In time such an institution would become entirely self-supporting. By these means the reproach so justly levelled against us would be removed, and we should not only be elevating ourselves, but we should be improving our artistic sense. (Cheers.) If the stage was not an educational force, then no branch of art was educating. If the drama was not art, then music, painting, sculpture were not educating.¹¹⁰

Forbes-Robertson's emphasis on the National Theatre being beautiful, an appeal to the educated, and his identification of drama as an educational art form, recalls the characteristics that he stood for. Forbes-Robertson also heavily appealed to a sense of national pride by stressing how London was lagging behind New York. As an iconic celebrity of the nation associated with both the traditions of Shakespeare and modern masculinity, just by his presence Forbes-Robertson served as a signifier for the nation.

Guest asserts that the problem with the concept of a national theatre was that potential audience tastes were far from homogenous and there was no unified national culture. For some early advocates of a national theatre, such as Matthew Arnold, the dramatic tastes of privileged metropolitan audiences served as an exemplar of culture, and the function of a subsidised national theatre was to draw diverse audiences to adopt the values of the elite. However, theatregoers as consumers could demand popular culture and it often became evident that it would be very

¹¹⁰ 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *Era*, 11 June 1910, p. 13.

difficult to ‘educate’ the masses to accept other forms of theatre. Intellectual or experimental theatre, such as Forbes-Robertson’s production of *Magda*, would often fail at the box office. By emphasising that a national theatre was an opportunity to produce drama that few people actually wanted to see, Guest argues, ‘advocates of a National Theatre unwittingly made clear the fragility of the tradition they invoked’.¹¹¹ Archer and Barker’s *Schemes and Estimates* acknowledged this contradictory trend and dismissed the idea of a national theatre that appealed to a minority. There were still further issues with the concept of who would form an audience – no part of the plans suggested that they would target the poor, and privileged intellectuals could afford to pay for tickets in non-subsidised commercial theatres.¹¹²

Cary Mazer has questioned why the actor-managers of the period would have supported a national theatre. These celebrities of the stage had spent years developing a brand and carving out a recognisable individual identity to increase their popularity and financial success, and yet a national theatre, based along Barker’s lines, would directly oppose celebrity and challenge the status quo. National theatre performances would also be in direct competition with the actor-managers, and, with government subsidies, it could potentially have larger budgets for their performances. In a letter to the *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)* printed 26 March 1908, Wyndham outlined his reasons for opposing the National Theatre scheme:

Either such an institution is to be national in fact as well as in name (and that I hold to be impossible), or it is to be the mere plaything and donation of wealthy financiers: therefore no more “national” in reality than a racehorse or a picture, or any other expensive toy bought by the shekels of the plutocrat [...] If it is State aid, you get that most mischievous and unfair form of all forms of competition – an organization of a Government pitted against enterprises by those who understand their business, and risk their money in conducting it. If a millionaire syndicate [...] it is the private property of an individual or individuals, and in no sense, material, moral, intellectual, or social, belonging to the people.¹¹³

According to Rosenthal, Irving was similarly apprehensive about a national theatre that would come under state control and have the potential to hinder creativity. He had dedicated his life to creating his celebrity status and ensuring that the plays at the Lyceum possessed a particular trademark signifying his style and brand, so it is understandable that he viewed a national theatre

¹¹¹ p. 284.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 294.

¹¹³ ‘National Theatre’, *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 26 March 1908, p. 9.

as a potential threat to his empire.¹¹⁴ Mazer explains that Irving later advocated for the National Theatre, but not for ‘an organisational system different from the one he had created at the Lyceum; he merely wanted to lessen the financial risks and personal sacrifice that would accrue to any individual who chose to dedicate his life to actor-management’.¹¹⁵ His change of stance and greater support for the scheme was therefore most likely the result of his own financial woes.

In *Schemes and Estimates*, Archer intimated that not all actors who sought to be, or were, actor-managers did so from ‘any overweening ambition’ and some entered management simply to escape the dominance of other managers.¹¹⁶ Mazer stresses the dichotomy between the actor-managers who supported the National Theatre and other supporters of the movement:

to the actor-managers who supported the National Theatre, the institution was a means of allowing the individual artist to flourish in the face of changing financial and managerial climate; to hard-line National Theatre supporters, the institution was the only way to save an art form from the tyranny of the individual.¹¹⁷

Mazer shows that Tree, for example, tried to undermine the National Theatre movement from within the SMNT committee. Tree was a contender for the title of Irving’s managerial successor in commercial theatre following Irving’s death. Mazer argues that Tree wanted to ensure that he would be the artistic director of a national theatre (if it were to materialise), or that Tree’s theatre company at His Majesty’s Theatre could evolve into a national theatre.¹¹⁸

Forbes-Robertson, on the other hand, advocated for a national theatre. He explained the reasons for his belief in the project in his biography. Recalling the fatigue he endured when playing *Hamlet* daily and the demands placed upon performers under the existing system, Forbes-Robertson remarked,

The only remedy for this is a National Repertoire Theatre. Unfortunately, the English spirit is such that any national encouragement of the fine arts would be sternly opposed. Those, however, who know and understand how important is the Drama as an inspiring influence, watch hopefully for a better time, and there are signs in various directions that

¹¹⁴ Rosenthal, p. 36.

¹¹⁵ Cary Mazer, ‘Treasons, Stratagems, and Spoils: Edwardian Actor-Managers and the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre,’ *Theatre Survey*, 24(1-2), 1-33, 1983
doi:10.1017/S004055740000003X, p. 6.

¹¹⁶ Archer, p. 34.

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 10-13.

the people are slowly beginning to understand the educational value of the spoken word upon the legitimate stage.¹¹⁹

He would express this belief while advocating for the movement. *The Era* reported that, after his farewell performance in Plymouth on 7 March 1913, he made a speech in front of the curtain and publicly argued for Municipal Theatres.¹²⁰ In 1914, he wrote in *Century Magazine* that only with the development of the National Theatre would ‘the theatre be in full possession of all its powers, and [...] take its rightful place among the other arts’.¹²¹ While in the USA in 1916 he also raised \$500 in donations towards the project (equivalent to \$11,800 in 2018, although it was initially misreported as being £500 which would have been equivalent to \$2,380 in 1916).¹²²

While Barker would have been an appropriate candidate for artistic director were a national theatre to follow the vision laid out in *Schemes and Estimates*, some members of the profession proposed Forbes-Robertson, most likely because of the advocacy he gave the project. In 1913, Grein argued that

[i]f soon, if ever, that much desired institution the National Shakespeare Theatre, so well-endowed with cash, so poorly with practical sense, descends from the clouds, let Forbes-Robertson be its leader. He has the knowledge, he has the tact; he is an artist; he is - the Man!¹²³

During the meeting of 19 May 1908 that formed the SMNT committee, Pinero spoke on the subject of a national theatre being a stimulant for new drama as well as traditional and Shakespearean drama, and expressed his opinion as to what could be expected from performances:

May I remind you also of Mr. Forbes Robertson’s performances, and of Mr. Benson’s performances, which are almost continuous in the provinces and in London? And as to Mr. Benson and Mr. Forbes Robertson, both of these actor-managers present their Shakespeare in the simplest possible dress, and in a style, I venture to think, which would not be unworthy of even a National Theatre.¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ (1925), p. 172.

¹²⁰ ‘Forbes-Robertson at Plymouth’, *Era*, 8 March 1913, p. 13.

¹²¹ ‘The Theatre of Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow’, *Century Magazine*, February 1914, p. 509.

¹²² ‘The National Theatre Scheme’, *The Times*, 6 December 1913, p. 10.

¹²³ ‘A Prince of His Calling’, *Times*, January 1913, repr. in *Bournemouth Graphic*, 7 March 1913, p. 11.

¹²⁴ ‘A National Theatre’, *Era*, 23 May 1908, p. 14.

At the National Theatre meeting on 7 June 1910, J. H. Barnes, fellow actor who would play Polonius in Forbes-Robertson's *Hamlet*, opined that if the theatre were to open he hoped Forbes-Robertson would be nominated as its first director and he reiterated this position in his autobiography.¹²⁵

While Tree may have been considered Irving's managerial successor, the theatre community generally considered Forbes-Robertson his artistic successor. The *Western Daily Press* declared him to be 'the legitimate successor of Irving in all that pertains to the highest and best in his art and calling', and the *Devon and Exeter Gazette* claimed that he was 'universally regarded as the successor of Sir Henry Irving. Irving himself [...] named him as the actor on whom his mantle should fall'.¹²⁶ As early as 1903, Shaw had written to Forbes-Robertson advising him to play *Richard III* and to continue to build up a big repertory, as it was 'the only means of becoming the undisputed head of the profession'.¹²⁷ Finally, while Forbes-Robertson was touring the UK giving a series of lectures after his retirement from the theatre, a journalist in Chesterfield observed that 'Irving found the stage a craft and left it a profession. Forbes Robertson left it not a profession but an art'.¹²⁸ Forbes-Robertson built upon Irving's work to professionalise the theatre (such as encouraging and nurturing young talented actors like Forbes-Robertson and eschewing his own profit) by experimenting in artistic forms of theatre. He was therefore a link between the commercial West End theatres and cutting-edge theatre. The elite critics appreciated the acting of Forbes-Robertson, but he had also proven that he was capable of turning his artistic drama into big business. As a National Theatre artistic director, Barker, on the other hand, would not have been motivated to turn a profit, as had been the case at the Court and the Savoy.¹²⁹ Even if the theatre did not wish to promote individual stars, the existing theatrical celebrity system was too dominant to be undermined in a consumer society (as demonstrated in the production of *Caesar and Cleopatra*) and the press was too star-struck to play by Barker's ideals. Just as the Actors' Association had not been able to operate without the actor-managers,

¹²⁵ 'Shakespeare Memorial Theatre', *Era*, 11 June 1910, p. 13; Barnes, p. 292.

¹²⁶ 'The Visit of Mr Forbes Robertson', *Western Daily Press*, 11 September 1909, p. 8; and 'Forbes-Robertson', *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 29 January 1913, p. 4.

¹²⁷ 21 and 22 December 1903, Add MS 62700, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers, Vol. VII, BL.

¹²⁸ 'Forbes Robertson in Chesterfield', *Derbyshire Courier*, 12 February 1921, p. 4.

¹²⁹ Cary M. Mazer, 'H. Granville Barker', in *Poel, Granville Barker, Guthrie, Wanamaker. Great Shakespeareans. Volume XV* ed. by Cary M. Mazer (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), e-book, pp. 55-97, p. 59.

so the National Theatre needed to acknowledge the celebrity focus of the theatrical world to keep financially solvent. Ultimately, however, the National Theatre did not appear during Forbes-Robertson's lifetime. It is possible that it was another casualty of the War and, if peace had prevailed and the National Theatre materialised earlier, with his artistic and commercial blend, Forbes-Robertson would have been a likely contender to manage it.

4.4 The Academy of Dramatic Art

The histories of the Actors' Association and National Theatre movement demonstrate that even those within the celebrity system underestimated the impact of celebrity and struggled to align celebrity with a more protected system of management. Conversely, the story of the beginnings of the Academy of Dramatic Art exemplifies a movement that successfully adopted and embraced celebrity.

4.4.1 The History of Founding a Dramatic School for England

Numerous attempts at founding a dramatic college were made throughout the nineteenth century: Frances Kelly (1790-1882) opened a school for actresses in the 1840s and a Musical and Dramatic Academy opened in Soho Square in 1848, but both were short-lived due to lack of funding. The actor Thomas Cooke (1786-1864) bequeathed funding for a Dramatic College in 1858 which incorporated the following year with the intention of operating as a training school for actors but, due to financial circumstances, it could only focus on providing retirement homes for actors and, although a college opened in 1865, it closed by 1877 due to high running costs.¹³⁰ Until the 1870s, the provincial stock system taught performers their trade as they appeared in numerous roles to varying audiences. As this system faded out there were calls for a training school for actors. An 1877 article in *The Era* blamed the lack of a drama school on 'star systems, engagements for the run of a piece, long runs, the broken up provincial school, the changes in English life and thought'.¹³¹ It was also thought that a dramatic school would help to professionalise and legitimise the theatre industry but dissenters argued that acting could not be taught and was a calling rather than something that could be learned. With the formation of the Actors' Association in 1891 there was hope that a dramatic school would follow.

¹³⁰ Baker, 1978, p. 149; 'Royal Dramatic College', *Morning Post*, 24 April 1865, p. 5.

¹³¹ 'An "Academy of Dramatic Art"', *Era*, 2 December 1877, p. 12.

Comedy actress Fanny Brough (1852-1914) was particularly active in promoting the idea of a dramatic school, or Conservatoire, as she preferred to call it. She spoke on the subject at the Playgoers' Club (as a guest as women were not permitted to be members) on 26 February 1903. She argued that a drama school should be subsidised and operate in conjunction with a London theatre. She acknowledged that there were numerous private teachers of elocution and acting, but argued that they took on any pupil regardless of their ability whereas an Academy would not. Brough addressed the assertion that acting could not be taught, and contended that the Academy should not be designed for geniuses of natural talent and that her concern was for ordinary actors, who, if well-trained, would allow plays to be well-cast rather than 'one star and several sticks'.¹³² Her rhetoric provoked discussion and even a vote on the issue, but the heads of the profession remained too divided on the subject to progress with the venture.¹³³

It was only after leading celebrities Irving and Tree became involved in the project that it began to flourish. At a meeting for actor-managers on 20 July 1899 chaired by Irving at the Lyceum, the attendees accepted a scheme for a dramatic school in principle, and a meeting chaired by Tree at Her Majesty's Theatre followed on 15 December 1899 to discuss the matter further. In his opening address, Tree advised that 'it is right that we managers should not pooh-pooh the efforts made by our brother actors to arrive at a state of things which may confer increased respect upon our calling'.¹³⁴ From this point, Tree assumed control of the scheme and it became a separate entity from the Actors' Association.¹³⁵ In July 1903, Tree announced that he planned to open a school of acting in conjunction with his theatre the following year without public grant or private charity, meaning that he alone bore the pecuniary risk.¹³⁶ Following the publication of an Academy prospectus in March 1904 which outlined its objective 'to give proper and adequate instruction and training for the stage and public speaking of all kinds in this country', applications opened for 16 to 30 year olds (by mid-March there were already 400 provisional candidates enrolled) and the Academy of Dramatic Art (ADA) opened on 25 April

¹³² 'A Dramatic Academy', *Glasgow Evening Post*, 10 March 1893, p. 5.

¹³³ 'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 7 June 1893, p. 4.

¹³⁴ 'The Actors' Association Scheme', *Era*, 16 December 1899, p. 15.

¹³⁵ 'Chit Chat', *Stage*, 17 May 1900, p. 13; and Acton Bond, 'To The Editor of the Era', *Era*, 2 June 1900, p. 12.

¹³⁶ 'His Majesty's Theatre', *London Daily News*, 9 July 1903, p. 7.

1904.¹³⁷ The inauguration event took place to literal fanfare and *The Globe* reported that the stalls of Her Majesty's Theatre were filled with attendees and 'actors and actresses particularly were so numerous represented that the assemblage suggested the idea of a full dress parade of the London theatrical profession'.¹³⁸ No one knew better than Tree the effectiveness of a grandiose event for securing the attention of the media and attracting publicity for funds and assistance. The day after the event *The Globe* reported that, ultimately, the Academy looked to obtain a charter and become a national institution and the *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)* detailed that Forbes-Robertson had registered his interest in being active within the scheme.¹³⁹

Of course, there were critics of the ADA who claimed that Tree would flood an already overcrowded market with more actors, and that only the wealthy could afford to attend the school. One letter to the editor of *The Stage* suggested that managers should boycott graduates of the academy. Forbes-Robertson wrote in defence of the scheme, arguing that raising 'the educational status of artists could not possibly injure the profession' and that the problem with overcrowding was the fault of managers who hired unsuitable people.¹⁴⁰ After two years of operating it was apparent that there was a demand for the ADA. With Bancroft as President, leading members of the profession (including Forbes-Robertson) formed a corporate body to share the responsibility of running of the Academy.¹⁴¹ Forbes-Robertson sat as a judge at competitions and was involved in students' rehearsals and presentations.¹⁴² *The Era* praised Forbes-Robertson after his return from his 1907 US tour for regularly attending rehearsals in London when he was resting in the country.¹⁴³ Thus, the ADA promoted its celebrity council and could insinuate a direct link between the students in training and the seasoned celebrities. The

¹³⁷ 'A New Hotel at Sidmouth', *London Evening Standard*, 9 March 1904, p. 4; 'Our London Letter', *Bognor Regis Observer*, 16 March 1904, p. 8; E. C. S., 'Some Thoughts on Mr. Tree's Academy of Acting', *Bystander*, 16 March 1904, p. 140; and 'Plays and Players', *Globe*, 21 April 1904, p. 4.

¹³⁸ 'Plays and Players', *Globe*, 21 April 1904, p.4.

¹³⁹ 'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Globe*, 26 April 1904, p. 5; and 'School of Dramatic Art', *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 26 April 1904, p. 6.

¹⁴⁰ 'Letters to the Editor', *Stage*, 12 May 1904, p. 19.

¹⁴¹ The other members of the executive council were Bancroft, Hare, Tree, Alexander, Maude, Bouchier, Pinero, and Barrie ('Mr Tree's Academy', *London Evening Standard*, 5 February 1906, p. 9).

¹⁴² 'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Morning Post*, 21 July 1906, p. 8; 'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Morning Post*, 23 July 1907, p. 4; and 'Academy of Art', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 8 January 1909, p. 10.

¹⁴³ 'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Era*, 27 July 1907, p. 11.

celebrity personae of the council members could be used for promotion within the ADA. For example, Forbes-Robertson ran an annual competition for elocution of which he was the judge. The winner of the prize could therefore benefit from the transferral of some of the celebrity's credentials onto his or her own emerging public identity.

In January 1913, the ADA announced that they had acquired a lease on land in Malet Street, Bloomsbury to extend their premises with the building of a theatre that could hold 300 people and, on 20 December 1913, Lady Bancroft laid the foundation stone in a media event to promote the occasion.¹⁴⁴ Thus, the ADA flourished with the cohesion of celebrity and enterprise – its champions recognising the value that the theatre celebrities could bring to the scheme through promotion and the meaning transferral of publicised characteristics. However, the celebrities behind the ADA could not prevent the impact of war on their plans. As men left to join the army in 1914, this meant an exodus of both builders of the theatre and students for the ADA. As early as April 1915, newspapers reported that the ADA was composed almost entirely of women, and there was only one man present in the company at the students' matinee of April 1916 and, by July 1916, men were entirely absent.¹⁴⁵ By December 1915, *The Stage* reported that the building of the school theatre had been completely halted by the War.¹⁴⁶

The War was a devastating blow to the ADA – with few students it was difficult to justify the existence of the school and income was insufficient to continue either building or the lessons. At this time, Irene Vanbrugh was on the council of the ADA and she detailed in her autobiography (1949) the events that took place to save the ADA.¹⁴⁷ Her brother, Kenneth Barnes (1878-1957), had been its director but was serving with the army. She explained that she felt resolved to save the ADA from collapse due to the efforts of all the individuals who had put their energy into making the school a reality, but mainly she was motivated to save it for her brother who had exerted a lot of effort into making it a success. At a meeting of the Council in early 1916, the other attendees (Bancroft, Pinero, Hare, Forbes-Robertson, and Maude) could see no alternative but to close the ADA, but, after deliberations, they concluded that a figure of £2,000

¹⁴⁴ 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 19 November 1913, p. 16; and 'The Academy of Dramatic Art', *Stage*, 24 December 1913, p. 29.

¹⁴⁵ "Music and the Drama", *People*, 4 April 1915, p. 4; 'Manless Plays', *Daily Mirror*, 12 April 1916, p. 2; and 'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Era*, 5 July 1916, p. 8.

¹⁴⁶ George Paston, 'The Young Idea', *Stage*, 16 December 1915, p. 21.

¹⁴⁷ Irene Vanbrugh, *To Tell My Story* (London: Hutchinson, 1949), pp. 112-117.

(equivalent to £133,200 in 2018) was the absolute minimum they would need to prevent closure. ‘Forbie,’ Vanbrugh explained, ‘suggested that we should all appear in a film, provided we could get some film manager to guarantee us £2,000, all of us giving our services’.¹⁴⁸ By this point in his career, Forbes-Robertson understood the monetary value of celebrity. More specifically, he speculated that the combined value of a group of celebrities held a higher currency than the sum of the values of its parts.

4.4.2 Masks and Faces

Members of the Council approached the Ideal Film Company who agreed to pay the required £2,000 and that they would meet the costs of production if the cast were to provide services free of charge (it seems that Ideal would keep any other profit from the venture). Ideal was in its infancy, having only begun production in 1915 (although it had been a film renting company since 1911), under the management of brothers Harry and Simon Rowson (1875-1951, 1877-1950), and with the more experienced Fred Paul (1880-1967) as the producer.¹⁴⁹ A further meeting decided that the play they would adapt was Charles Reade and Tom Taylor’s (1817-1880) *Masks and Faces*, with Forbes-Robertson (Triplet), Maude (Charles Pomander), Vanbrugh (Peg Woffington), Gladys Cooper (Mrs Vane), and Winifred Emery (1861-1924, Mrs Triplet) in the lead roles, but numerous other theatre celebrities would take on minor parts. The play recounts episodes in the life of Irish stage actress Peg Woffington (1720-1760) and the tensions between her public celebrity life and her private self. The story begins with Woffington joining the Covent Garden Players, giving her debut performance in London, and being publicly praised and admired. The film portrays the real-life rivalry that existed between Woffington and actress Kitty Clive (1711-1785), and also depicts two suitors, Ernest Vane and Charles Pomander, as they try to woo her. Woffington’s private character as a generous and virtuous woman is characterised through her scheme to reunite Vane with his wife Mabel, and the generosity of Woffington towards James Triplet – the poor poet-painter played by Forbes-Robertson. The choice of play was significant as, *The Era* observed, ‘it is in a unique way an actors’ play – a play about players’.¹⁵⁰ In his assessment of the film, Burrows describes it as ‘a film *about* theatre. Or, rather, it is a nostalgic celebration of British theatre history, recreating the social scene which

¹⁴⁸ Vanbrugh, p. 113.

¹⁴⁹ Low, p. 92.

¹⁵⁰ ‘Masks and Faces’, *Era*, 7 March 1917, p. 20.

orbited the Covent Garden Theatre in the eighteenth century'.¹⁵¹ Woffington was a significant example of a theatre celebrity from the 18th century, which emphasised the longevity of the stage. The play was first performed at the Haymarket Theatre on 20 November 1852, with celebrated performers – Benjamin Webster (1797-1882) and Mary Anne Stirling (1815-1895) – as Triplet and Woffington. The Bancrofts revived the play in November 1875 at the Prince of Wales's and in February 1881 at the Haymarket. Therefore, the play was loaded with theatrical heritage and a prestige that celebrated the long history of the theatre and, more specifically, the theatre celebrity.

The intertitles opening the film explain that the purpose of the production is to build a theatre for the ADA. A recreation of the Council meeting where it decided to make the film follows. Vanbrugh recalled how, at the time, it was not 'an honour to appear on the screen. I had to use every possible form of persuasion to gather them together'.¹⁵² Barrie, Alexander, Pinero, Bancroft, Shaw, Hare, Forbes-Robertson, C. M. Lowne (1863-1941), and Vanbrugh are filmed sitting around a table discussing the dilemma and considering the production of a film. Intertitles capture the conversation that took place, including Pinero saying, 'The "Pictures" owe much to the stage. It shall repay,' to which Hare replies, 'There should be no caste-prejudice. The film is the sister of the Stage'. Alexander offers that a film would be a 'worthy memory' of the English stage, and Shaw declares that he is all for the proposal as 'There's money in it'. *The Bioscope* described the venture as an '*entente cordiale* between stage and cinema'; thus did the major personalities of the stage offer an allegiance with the cinema.¹⁵³ Burrows asserts that, like the earlier filmed plays/adaptations in which theatre celebrities appeared, the film was an attempt to draw various social groups to the cinema and create a united national culture. Additionally, the film allowed the exhibition of a performance and of theatre celebrities that otherwise would not have been able to travel across the country. In 1916 there was tightened control of railway services because of the necessity of transporting military personnel and equipment, and touring theatre companies were virtually non-existent. The film was therefore an attempt to unite socially distinct groups and geographically disparate groups.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵¹ Burrows, (2003), p. 206.

¹⁵² Vanbrugh, p. 116.

¹⁵³ 'All-Star Day at Elstree', *Bioscope*, 7 December 1916, p. 966.

¹⁵⁴ Burrows, (2003), pp. 207-209.

The film took a year to make as the filming was beset with difficulties – most especially in trying to coordinate the schedules of such a number of celebrities. One issue concerned the Ideal Filming Company’s rival, Samuelson Film Company, to whom Gladys Cooper was under contract. Samuelson was initially under the impression that the film was being made for charity but, as it was not, they would not permit Cooper to appear in the film and demanded that Ideal erase the scenes in which she had already appeared. Vanbrugh recalled that, at a meeting to discuss the issue, H. B. Irving offered to appear in a film for Samuelson’s in exchange for the permission to retain Cooper’s scenes. Samuelson had been trying to persuade Irving to take out a contract with them to no avail, and so agreed to the offer. This was yet another example of celebrity being used as a currency in this operation.

The media was attentive to the film before filming was even completed on account of the star appeal. *The Era* reported that ‘the cast is one of extraordinary brilliancy, the supers alone forming a remarkable collection of stage celebrities’.¹⁵⁵ Vanbrugh describes that

the scheme seemed to have won for itself a certain glamour. Those not included in the cast began to wish they were, and when on a Sunday we wanted big crowds for the audience at Drury Lane for Peg’s début and for the supper given in her honour which followed, I think one of the most notable gatherings of all the profession must have assembled at the studios to appear in the crowds.¹⁵⁶

Newspapers reported on the assemblage of stars at Ideal’s studios and of the crowds of people that would gather to get a glimpse of the celebrities as they arrived or left in the midst of winter and war.¹⁵⁷ Ideal invited the press to witness some of the filming taking place at the Elstree Studios at Borehamwood, after which *The Era* reporter appears somewhat star struck in his/her article declaring, ‘never again will such a glittering array of stars be assembled’.¹⁵⁸ The seasoned actors were clearly conscious of the role of the media in the promotion of the film and the continued public interest in their celebrity.

Following trade shows from March 1917, the press built the public’s anticipation, primed their reception to the film, and highlighted the significance of the project:

¹⁵⁵ ‘Masks and Faces’, *Era*, 8 November 1916, p. 19.

¹⁵⁶ Vanbrugh, pp. 115-116.

¹⁵⁷ ‘An Ideal Joke’, *Era*, 22 November 1916, p. 19; and ‘An “All-Star” Cast’, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 7 March 1917, p. 4.

¹⁵⁸ ‘Masks and Faces’, *Era*, 6 December 1916, p. 22.

Before the revolutionary days of the cinema, actors could only be memorialised in letters on brass or by dead statues in stone. The Council of the Academy of Dramatic Art, at whose instance this production took place, has determined to use the art of the cinema for a much more worthy memorial of the Stage of to-day, and this all-star film version of 'Masks and Faces,' from which the Building Fund of the Academy will substantially benefit, is the striking result.¹⁵⁹

The *Pall Mall Gazette* observed that, through the film, a 'link between stage and screen has been firmly welded'.¹⁶⁰ The members of the Council desired their own celebrity to be memorialised and celebrated in this production. The publicity did not end at this point. The premier of the film took place at the Strand Kinema on Agar Street in London on 14 May 1917 and the ADA secured the attendance of Princess Helena (1846-1943, the King's aunt and the fifth child of Queen Victoria) and Princess Marie Louise (1872-1956, her daughter) – what appears to have been the first ever instance of any member of the royal family attending a film premier. Vanbrugh personally introduced the film, emphasising its significance owing to its cast, its production, and that the performers gave their services for free. She emphasised the association of members of the dramatic profession with charitable work, which she saw reflected in the story of Peg Woffington, who was generous to her poorer colleagues.¹⁶¹

The impact of the drive for publicity surrounding the film was significant. As the film was commercially distributed and showings began in May, the press across the country stressed the star cast of the film. An advertisement for the film in Nottingham (see Fig 4.3) prominently alerts readers that it 'STAR[S] ALL THE LEADERS OF THE BRITISH STAGE' and then under the heading 'THE ALL-STAR CAST' lists the celebrities involved in the production. The press hailed the film as a 'sensation [...] because of the extraordinary cast', 'a veritable triumph', 'THE EVENT OF THE YEAR', and 'The Greatest English Photoplay in the History of Cinematography', with reports that some cinemas had been forced to turn hundreds of patrons away due to its popularity.¹⁶² In September 1917 *The Era* reported that the rights to the film had been bought in the USA: 'Nothing is said as to the price given, but it may be conjectured that it must have been a handsome one. It is very satisfactory to see British pictures gradually making

¹⁵⁹ 'Masks and Faces', *Era*, 7 March 1917, p. 20.

¹⁶⁰ 'News from Filmland', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 March 1917, p. 12.

¹⁶¹ 'Masks and Faces Film', *Stage*, 17 May 1917, p. 13.

¹⁶² 'Masks and Faces', *Hull Daily Mail*, 25 May 1917, p. 3; 'Ideal', *Era*, 23 May 1917, p. 19; and 'Hippodrome Todmorden', *Todmorden & District News*, 5 October 1917, p. 1.

headway in America'.¹⁶³ It was the combination of celebrity and enterprise that resulted in its success. The Council could have launched a benefit concert or play, but, as one reporter acknowledged, no theatre manager could hope to present such a large array of stage personalities at one time.¹⁶⁴ A film could be replicated and distributed internationally (which meant more profit), but also the personae of the theatre celebrities could reach a wider network.

TO-DAY, FRIDAY AND SATURDAY

STARRING ALL THE LEADERS
:: OF THE BRITISH STAGE ::

MASKS and FACES

A TALE OF THE LOVES AND THE KIND
HEART OF THE FAMOUS ACTRESS
AND BEAUTY, PEG WOFFINGTON, THE
DARLING OF THE THEATRES AND
OF THE GALLANTS OF HER DAY

THE ALL-STAR CAST

Peg Woffington	IRVING VANDERBILT	Sooper	LYALL SWEET
Ernest Vane	DENNIS NEILSON TERRY	Dame Best	HELEN HAYE
Mabel Vane	GLADYS COOPER	Mrs. Vane's postillion	MABEL RUSSELL
Sir Charles Pomander	BEN WESTER	Fiddler at Covent Garden Theatre	
Triplet	Sir JOHNSTON FORBES-ROBERTSON		WEDDON CROSSMITH
Quin	C. M. LOWME	Fencing Master	GERALD AMES
Rich	NIGEL PLAYFAIR	A Landlady	MARY BROUGH
Kitty Cive	LILLIAN McCARTHY	Pompey	PHYLLIS HART
Colly Cibber	DION BOUCCICAUT		GERTRUDE ELLIOTT
Burdock	HENRY VIBART	Members of	LILLIAN BRAITHWAITE
(E. Vane's servant)		Rich's Company	LOTTIE VENON
Hunsdon	GERALD DU MAURIER		STELLA CAMPBELL
Lovell	DONALD CALTHROP		VIOLA TREE
(Pomander's servants)			RENÉE MAYER
Mrs. Triplet	WYNIFRED EMERY	Triplet's	FABIA DRAKE
Calander	H. B. IRVING	Children	JOAN BUCKMASTER
Smart	J. FISHER WHITE		G. H. ROWSON

NOTABILITIES ALSO APPEARING

Sir GEORGE ALEXANDER	Sir JOHN HALL
Sir SQUARE BANGROFT	Sir ARTHUR PINERO
Sir JAMES BARRIE	GEORGE BERNARD SHAW

¶ FULL PROGRAMME, COMEDY & INTEREST

The Picture House

LONG ROW, NOTTINGHAM.

Fig 4.3: Newspaper advertisement for *Masks and Faces* at the Picture House in Nottingham (1917).¹⁶⁵

¹⁶³ 'Filmland Gossip', *Era*, 12 September 1917, p. 20.

¹⁶⁴ 'Sayings and Doings of Cheltenham', *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 30 June 1917, p. 9.

¹⁶⁵ 'Masks and Faces', *Nottingham Evening Post*, 31 May 1917, p. 4.

Ideal paid the ADA Council their £2,000 and building on the theatre restarted. The ADA survived the War and, in 1919, Forbes-Robertson, Pinero, H. B. Irving, and du Maurier all committed to continue teaching classes.¹⁶⁶ By April 1920, the ADA continued to struggle financially with the theatre building still incomplete, but the *Illustrated London News* observed that ten men took part in that season's matinee, indicating that students were returning to the school.¹⁶⁷ In May 1920 the ADA presented a petition to the king for the granting of a Royal Charter of Incorporation, and, on 22 July 1920, it was accepted and the school became the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art, as it continues to operate today. The theatre opened on 27 May 1921, almost eight years after Lady Bancroft laid the foundation stone (although she died earlier in 1921 and Squire Bancroft was unable to attend the inauguration). Despite this shadow being cast over the event, the Council ensured that they incorporated theatrical celebrity into the occasion, with Hare and the Prince of Wales (the future Edward VIII) offering speeches before Forbes-Robertson read a poem composed by Robert Bridges (1844-1930, the Poet Laureate) for the occasion.

4.5 Conclusion

Chapter 3 explored the functions of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity in society; this chapter takes an introverted approach to assess the effect of celebrity on the structures and processes within the theatre industry. It investigates the development and pursuit of theatre bodies and institutions over the course of the nineteenth century with the aim of professionalising and standardising the industry. Professionalising the industry necessitated training aspiring actors effectively and representing and advocating for members of the industry in legal challenges.

The industry required its leaders – the actor-managers – to be visible celebrities by virtue of the occupation. As identifiable and influential role models to other members of the profession they were apposite figures to spearhead advancement within the industry. Forbes-Robertson's early ventures as an actor-manager demonstrate how the system operating at the time hindered artistic advancement and innovation for dramatic arts and that actor-managers could be financially ruined if an experimental play was a box-office failure. The system discouraged

¹⁶⁶ 'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Era*, 12 March 1919, p. 8.

¹⁶⁷ J. T. Grein, 'The World of the Theatre', *Illustrated London News*, 17 April 1920, p. 21; and 'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Stage*, 1 April 1920, p. 15.

deviating from plays by established and favoured dramatists and it often meant actors playing roles according to their type. The industry required change and security in the form of representation and subsidy.

However, actor-managers were not always unified in their approach to establishing bodies to protect the industry and this hindered progress. There was an understandable friction between the existing theatre celebrities and the National Theatre Movement as it required the cooperation and coordination of the actor-managers to materialise but it would effectively increase competition with their own enterprises. Additionally, the National Theatre scheme required government involvement in an industry that had largely operated independently which some believed could threaten creativity. The scheme hit an impasse with practitioners' clashing opinions on the role of celebrity within a repertoire theatre. Such contentions continued even after the National Theatre began to materialise from 1963 as its director, Laurence Olivier (1907-1989), pursued a policy of composing his ensembles of 'renowned' and 'to be renowned' performers whereas his associate directors, William Gaskill (1930-2016) and John Dexter (1925-1990), aspired to eschewing the theatrical star system.¹⁶⁸

Conversely, the cooperation of theatre celebrities could result in tangible benefits for the industry. As illustrated by the ADA movement – and especially the *Masks and Faces* venture – theatre celebrity had a monetary value that was somewhat resistant to the wartime problems. More significantly, however, was the fact that Forbes-Robertson was aware of the (monetary and ideological) value of his (and his colleagues') celebrity. This recognition resulted in a coordinated effort that saved the venture from financial collapse and demonstrates that celebrity and the industry can co-exist.

¹⁶⁸ Rosenthal, p. 151.

Conclusion

Theatre history has recognised Forbes-Robertson as an important figure for his ‘great’ interpretation of Hamlet and his contributions to dramatic performances, but sidelines the craft and the processes that went into the creation of his most celebrated roles and his celebrity self. Mole (2007) explains, ‘Celebrity culture does not want to be understood. It functions best when consumers remain mystified by it, attributing a celebrity’s success to his or her magical star quality’.¹ On occasions Forbes-Robertson did attempt to ‘de-mystify’ his celebrity. For example, Hesketh Pearson recalled that when he asked Forbes-Robertson why he became an actor, he replied, ‘Six guineas a week, from Phelps’.² This mercenary approach to acting lies in opposition to performers who claim to act out of an artistic calling. Additionally, in a perplexing conclusion to his 1925 autobiography – supposedly a place for confessions and truth, and a vehicle for forging greater intimacy between celebrity and public – Forbes-Robertson admitted,

Rarely, very rarely have I enjoyed myself in acting. This cannot be the proper mental attitude for an actor, and I am persuaded, as I look back upon my career, that I was not temperamentally suited to my calling. For years I fought hard against this ‘ego,’ but seldom would I reach that impersonal exaltation, so to speak, which it seems to me an actor should be able to attain.³

In this confession can be read an attempt to undermine his own celebrity as an actor. However, his celebrity and reputation for greatness were so entrenched in the minds of his public, that it could not accept that there was not something innately great in him that created the star quality. A reviewer of the autobiography in the *Illustrated London News* addresses this confession:

in this book he confesses his nervousness. Nay, it was that very temperamental uneasiness, which he instances as not suited to the stage, which paradoxically strikes at the root of his greatness as an actor. He achieved greatness in great parts where the whole being of him could sink into the character.⁴

The reviewer asserts that Forbes-Robertson’s indifferent attitude towards acting actually made him a great actor because he could play himself, alluding to an inherent quality in his private self that magnetised his public.

¹ p. 1.

² p. 1.

³ p. 288.

⁴ G. F. H., ‘The World of the Theatre’, *Illustrated London News*, 11 April 1925, p. 24.

Just as Chapter 4 narrates the critics' condemnation of his modesty for casting himself in a meagre role in *Magda* in 1896, so other commentators accused him of modesty, or an ignorance, of his celebrity. For instance, at the time of his Drury Lane Farewell and his knighthood in June 1913, journalist Keble Howard (1875-1928) wrote,

Here is another man who, I think, has been kept out of his inheritance by his own modesty. For years past, the public have been quite ready to make an idol of Forbes-Robertson, but he never gave them the chance. When so many are clamouring for idolatry, it is a sort of self-indulgence to sit still and let the waves of enthusiasm pass over your head.⁵

Howard's suggestion is that Forbes-Robertson was almost oblivious to his status. Similarly, the theatre critic and historian, Ernest Short, called Forbes-Robertson's stardom a 'curious case' as the 'only thing lacking [in his stardom] was an absorbing desire to shine in the mock world of the stage'.⁶ These observers of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity, who accuse him of lacking in ambition or motivation, appear to be, to use Mole's term, 'mystified' by his celebrity themselves, as they are oblivious to the constant manipulation of his celebrity brand throughout his career. This suggests that he was particularly subtle in the way he promoted himself.

The aim of this study of Johnston Forbes-Robertson was to show that a specific set of celebrity mechanisms, some consciously operated and some operating automatically, existed before the era of mechanical reproduction in the twentieth century in the form of theatrical celebrity. It does this by highlighting the foundational characteristics of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity persona, exploring the industries that created and circulated the idea of his celebrity, evaluating the commercial and social functions of this celebrity, and its use within the theatre industry. The thesis acknowledges the extent to which celebrity is a deliberate and carefully constructed product of a career-long process of meaning-making that is simultaneously stable yet adaptable to suit changing social values and needs. While this meaning can be founded on intrinsic aspects of the private self, meaning can also be obtained from external sources, such as other celebrities and fictive roles, and transferred on. The individual does not act alone in creating this identity – this thesis evidences that celebrity is the product of an interaction of an individual, the apparatuses of various industries, and the public. Therefore, while a celebrity actively manufactures their public persona, as they are aware of the power (and of the monetary value) associated with celebrity, they are not always complicit in producing all aspects of the persona.

⁵ 'Motley Notes', *Sketch*, 11 June 1913, p. 290.

⁶ *Sixty Years of Theatre* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1951), p. 30.

The first two chapters of the thesis deconstruct the process through which Forbes-Robertson's celebrity emerged. They demonstrate that social networks were important for the creation of celebrity long before the Digital Age. Celebrity is not created in isolation – celebrities create other celebrities through association. Forbes-Robertson borrowed prestige from his associates within the art world (Millais and Rossetti), his stage mentors (Phelps, Bancroft, Irving, and Shaw), and his leading ladies (Ellen Terry, Anderson, Campbell, and Elliott) to found and strengthen his celebrity. However, celebrities do not create celebrities merely to orbit within their own star system, but to communicate with a public. This thesis grants autonomy to Forbes-Robertson's public – the consumers of his celebrity. The use of archival material, including the analysis of messages on postcards featuring photographs of Forbes-Robertson that were sent in the 1900s, reveal the involvement of his public in the creation of celebrity. The messages indicate an intimacy between celebrity and public as the senders not only regurgitate celebrity and theatre news, but also offer their own opinions on the affairs of celebrities.

Throughout the 1870s and 1880s Forbes-Robertson forged a public persona hinged upon his good looks and his talents as a painter by playing in roles that emphasised these natural assets. The nature of the celebrity condition for a theatre or film performer differs from other forms of celebrity as there is not just a public and private self at play but also a host of fictive selves navigating their way into the public's perception of the celebrity. Newspaper reviews and interviews synergised his private self and fictive roles to create a desirable public persona that carried meaning beyond his immediate theatre audiences to a public who had never seen him perform. Forbes-Robertson solidified his celebrated position when he pursued his own management and mastered the challenging role of Hamlet. Chapter 2 highlights the value of this canonical role towards him becoming a major player in celebrity culture. Moreover, without a successful Hamlet (or other 'test piece') there could be no *Passing* (or celebrity vehicle) as Forbes-Robertson ascribed his accumulated meaning and cultural heritage to the new unknown fictional character of the Stranger.

Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet materialised in the 1890s—the heyday of the actor-managers. The 1890s was the period when the institutions of the theatre industry (the change from stock system to star system) and the media (new journalism and photography) aligned to create the conditions to produce theatre celebrities who differed from their predecessors. The respectability afforded to the acting profession following Henry Irving's knighthood in 1895 for his services to

the stage gave the theatre celebrities of the 1890s increased professionalism and legitimacy. However, with greater accountability for the health and safety of audiences came increased expenditure on maintaining theatre buildings and soaring rents. These changes to the business nature of the theatre in the 1900s meant that Forbes-Robertson did not take a long-term lease of a particular London theatre or attach his name or assign his brand to a particular entertainment location. Instead, he relied on touring across the UK and internationally with occasional sub-leases of London theatres. *Hamlet* had to carry Forbes-Robertson's celebrity globally especially when his celebrity reached its apotheosis on the brink of his retirement in 1913 when his manager, Percy Burton, toiled to create a media frenzy around his farewell performances in the UK and in the US and Canada. His film *Hamlet* was a component of this major retirement project and could travel ahead of his theatrical tours to advertise his arrival.

This thesis goes beyond describing the basis of Forbes-Robertson's celebrity to assessing the wider uses of his theatrical celebrity. He spent the first 20 years of his career attaching meaning to his name and brand and so his public identity was tethered to the ideologies desired in him by his public. The socio-political-historical context shaped his celebrity, but it also shaped the cultures and practices of the industry. As Chapter 2 shows, the film industry attempted to fortify its reputation and diversify its audiences through an association with the meaning embodied in Forbes-Robertson. His appearance in films coincided with a rising dominance of the visual form and pre-empted the importance celebrity would come to have in the film industry. Additionally, Forbes-Robertson's body was a code for artistic and romantic masculinity and had a commercial value as a result of this contained meaning. Cigarette and soap packaging, advertisements, and endorsements promoted an association with Forbes-Robertson in the hope that consumers would desire to identify with the ideals he represented. While in Canada, his body became a site for ideas of Englishness and nationhood as a result of his reputation as the greatest Hamlet. This meaning transferred to new public buildings and spaces in a purchase of cultural capital. Chapter 3 illustrates that a political and philanthropic cause functions in the same way as a commodity in that a theatre celebrity can ascribe meaning to it and that meaning transfers to supporters of the cause. Stage performers have a long history of charity work, and the theatre stage was an important platform from which the celebrity promoted political and social causes. The emergent celebrity is a highly politicised phenomenon that can subtly influence the public in realms beyond his/her industry. The insights gained into the role Forbes-Robertson's celebrity played in promoting the plight for women's suffrage and how he urged men to embrace a form of

masculinity that was not threatened by enfranchised women, also gesture towards a deeper understanding of his society's values. The fundraising efforts of Forbes-Robertson and the theatre community to aid war charities demonstrate their knowledge of the significance of celebrity. Meanwhile, the war work he undertook in the capacity of a diplomat illustrates the level of political power possessed by celebrities at the time even when he operated in a field that was not associated with his entertainment medium.

This thesis contributes to theatre history in that, for example, rather than stating that acting became a more respectable profession in this period, it shows how its members actively cultivated these changes by utilising their theatrical celebrity. During Forbes-Robertson's career movements striving to professionalise the theatre industry gained momentum and resulted in bodies that flourished throughout the twentieth century and continue to provide necessary services for industry members in the twenty-first century. Forbes-Robertson promoted theatrical councils and bodies and used his celebrity to contribute to these movements – his recognition of the value of celebrity (when he proposed a multi-celebrity coalition) saved the ADA from closure during the First World War. Celebrity continues to promote and legitimise the operations of the acting community. The website homepage of Equity – the UK's current largest trade union for performers and entertainment professionals (formed in 1930) – highlights photographs of the theatre, TV, and film celebrities Giles Terera (1976-), Helen Mirren (1945-), and Tony Robinson (1946-) to promote its services.⁷ Meanwhile, in September 2015, RADA acknowledged its long-term commitment to showcasing celebrity when it appointed Sir Kenneth Branagh (1960-) – an actor/director/producer who has worked in theatre, TV, and film – as its President.⁸ This illustrates that the culture industries of twenty-first century society are indebted to the changes brought about by Forbes-Robertson and his colleagues, and the fact that this depended upon trading celebrity demonstrates how celebrity shapes societies.

In Forbes-Robertson's lifetime however, tensions between celebrity and the desires of the theatre industry could also hinder progress. A National Theatre did not materialise in London until 1963 despite motions in favour of it from at least a century earlier. This was because, at the

⁷ 'Sign up', 2020, in <https://www.equity.org.uk> [accessed 3 April 2020].

⁸ 'Award-winning Kenneth Branagh becomes our new President', 30 September 2015, in <https://www.rada.ac.uk/about-us/news-and-press/award-winning-kenneth-branagh-becomes-our-new-president/>, [accessed 3 April 2020].

turn of the twentieth century, a National Theatre undermined the actor-management system – effectively a celebrity system – and some members of the industry were not prepared for such a revolution. Since its inauguration, the National Theatre has negotiated a balance between the star system and progressive drama. In its 2018 to 2019 season, the National Theatre presented 23 different productions including (its website boasts) three programmes by young people. Three of the 23 plays were adaptations of Shakespeare plays. The first, *Pericles*, (26 August to 28 August 2018, directed by Emily Lim) was the National Theatre’s first Public Acts performance featuring a community cast of 200 amateurs from a cross-section of society. *Antony and Cleopatra* (18 September 2018 to 19 January 2019, directed by Simon Godwin (1978-)) featured film celebrities Ralph Fiennes (1962-) and Sophie Okonedo (1968-). Finally, *The Winter’s Tale* (6 to 21 February 2019) was a condensed production for children by up and coming director Justin Audibert. Additionally, on 15 September, theatre and film celebrity Ian McKellen (1939-) appeared at the National Theatre in *Ian McKellen on Stage* to discuss his career and life – a celebration of his celebrity that is a fusion of his public and private selves and the fictitious roles that have made him famous.⁹ This demonstrates that experimental drama and celebrity now co-exist at the National Theatre.

This research changes dominant trends in celebrity studies by demonstrating that celebrity has a long history and theatrical celebrity was a prevalent form between 1880 and 1920 and proves that this was an important period in the history of celebrity. The theatre industry produced celebrities before Forbes-Robertson’s time, but his celebrity peaked at a particular moment when the traditional role and status of the actor-manager was about to decline due to wider economic changes, and his celebrity was subject to these forces. The actor-management system may have been a casualty of war, but the star system that it hinged upon endured and transferred to the new medium of film which prompts further explorations of the actor-management system. As this study is limited to a close-examination of one celebrity of the period, there is scope to further this research for the benefit of both celebrity studies and theatre history by comparing Forbes-Robertson’s career with other contemporary actor-managers as each route towards theatrical celebrity was highly individualised. Forbes-Robertson arrived in the industry as the son of an art lecturer with an established network of contacts, many from industries with a close relationship with the theatre (artists, journalists, writers), to support his pursuit. An actor without a well-

⁹ ‘Our Year in Numbers’, 2019, in <http://review.nationaltheatre.org.uk/#2019/productions/129>, [accessed 3 April 2020].

connected father or from outside of London would have had a greater challenge establishing a notable celebrity identity. Similarly, gender is significant and this thesis (particularly the discussion of the Forbes-Robertson-Campbell partnership) prompts questions regarding the differences between male and female celebrity-making in the period.

The archival evidence that informs this thesis changes dominant perceptions of Victorian and Edwardian audiences and celebrity consumers. The descriptions of fans clamouring to shake hands with a stage performer, and evidence of women sending their friends photographs of handsome male actors to gaze upon seems incompatible with a perception of Victorian and Edwardian England as a conservative and prudish society. There is therefore scope for further research into the consumers of both theatre performances and celebrity and the ways this public contributes to the creation of celebrity. Furthermore, as celebrities reflect societies' values, there is an opportunity to compare celebrity consumers in different locations to assess whether Forbes-Robertson's public persona had the same meaning attached to it for different publics. This thesis details moments of Forbes-Robertson's pursuits in the USA and Canada, but it prompts further questions on the nature of trans-Atlantic and global celebrity at the turn of the twentieth century.

Chapter 1 emphasised the importance of Forbes-Robertson's particular adherence to aesthetic beauty to his public subjectivity. New forms of visual culture that emerged over his career encouraged the association; for example, publications printed images of the actor alongside text, photographs of the celebrity (and, in some instances, his home) created a greater sense of public intimacy, and the rise of film captured the movements of a stage performer renowned for grace and elegance. Forbes-Robertson posed for the camera throughout his career into the 1920s just as he had posed for Rossetti's painting in the 1870s. He never gave up his own commitment to art as he continued to paint, sketch, and design stage sets and costumes throughout his theatrical career. As an actor-artist – both a subject and creator of beauty on stage and on canvas, Forbes-Robertson would therefore make an apposite focus for a study on the relationship between the theatre and visual arts.

This study demonstrates that celebrity is a socially relevant and powerful phenomenon with a dynamic history. It shows that celebrity culture is older than academics often acknowledge and, although technology changes, the structures that underpin celebrity remain constant. This case study of Forbes-Robertson indicates that the theatre industry is a significant feature of this history

and deconstructing the public subjectivities of theatre performers provides an insight into the values of historical societies and connects the present with the past. This strengthens the wealth of knowledge on the historical dimension of celebrity as a public performance of identity and selfhood.

Bibliography

Books, Journals, and Articles

- Abel, Richard. *Encyclopaedia of Early Cinema* (London: Routledge, 2005)
- Alberoni, Francesco. 'The Powerless "Elite": Theory and Sociological Research on the Phenomenon of the Stars', in *Sociology of Mass Communications*, ed. by Denis McQuail (Middlesex: Penguin, 1972 repr. 1976), pp 75-98
- Alford, B. W. E. *W.D. and H. O. Wills and the Development of the UK Tobacco Industry, 1786-1965* (London and New York: Routledge, 1973 repr. 2006)
- Anderson, Mary. *A Few Memories* (New York: Harper, 1896) in *Internet Archive* <<https://archive.org/details/afewmemories01andegoog>>
- Archer, William. *About the Theatre* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1886)
- . 'For the Crown', in *The Theatrical 'World' of 1896* (London: Walter Scott, 1897) in *Internet Archive*
https://archive.org/stream/theatrical189600archuoft/theatrical189600archuoft_djvu.txt, pp. 59-67
- . *The Old Drama and the New; an Essay in Re-valuation* (Boston: Small, Maynard and Company, 1923)
- Archer, William. and Harley Granville-Barker, *Scheme & Estimates for a National Theatre* (New York: Duffield, 1908)
- Armstrong, W. A. 'Bernard Shaw and Forbes-Robertson's Hamlet', *Shakespeare Quarterly*, 15(1), 1964, pp. 27-31 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2867951>>
- Arnold, Matthew. 'Up to Easter,' *Nineteenth Century*, XXI (May 1887), pp. 629-43
- . 'The French Play in London' in *Nineteenth Century*, later reprinted: Matthew Arnold, *Irish Essays* (London: Smith Elder, 1882)
- Ashwell, Lena. *Modern Troubadours, A Record of the Concerts at the Front* (Florida: Hard Press, 1920 repr. 1922)
- Auerbach, Nina. *Player in Her Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987)
- Baker, Michael. *The Rise of the Victorian Actor* (New Jersey: Rowman and Littlefield, 1978)
- Ball, Robert. Hamilton. *Shakespeare on Silent Film: A Strange Eventful History* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1968)

- Barnes, J. H. *Forty Years on the Stage: Others (Principally) And Myself* (New York: E. P. Dutton, 1915; repr. London: Forgotten Books, 2019)
- Bassett, Troy J. “‘A Characteristic Product of the Present Era’: Gender and Celebrity in Helen C. Black’s *Notable Women Authors of the Day* (1893)”, in *Women Writers and the Artifacts of Celebrity in the Long Nineteenth Century*. ed. by Ann. R. Hawkins and Maura C. Ives (UK and USA: Ashgate Publishing, 2012)
- Becker, William B. ‘Cabinet Cards’ in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol I*, ed. by John Hannavy (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 233-234.
- Beerbohm, Max. *More Theatres 1898-1903* (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1969)
- Bennett, Susan. ‘Calgary’s Cultural Topography: The Performance of a City,’ in *Performance Studies in Canada* ed. by Laura Levin and Marlis Schweitzer (Canada: McGill-Queen’s UP, 2017), pp. 43-66
- . *Theatre Audiences: A Theory of Production and Reception, 2nd edn* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997)
- Bettany, W. A. Lewis. *The Strange Case of Mr. Forbes-Robertson* (London: Eglinton, 1893)
- Bishop, Matthew and Michael Green. *Philanthrocapitalism: How the Rich Can Save the World and Why We Should Let Them* (London: A & C Black Publishers, 2008)
- Boorstin, Daniel. J. *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo-Events in America* (New York: Vintage Books, 1961 repr. 2012), Google ebook
- Booth, Michael. *Prefaces to English Nineteenth-Century Theatre* (Manchester: UP, 1980)
- . *Theatre in the Victorian Age*. (Cambridge: UP, 1991)
- Bowley, Arthur L. *The Change in the Distribution of the National Income, 1880-1913* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1920), in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/changeindistribu00bowluoft>
- Bratton, Jacky. ‘The Celebrity of Edmund Kean: An Institutional Story’, *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain 1660-2000*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 90-106, Eblib ebook
- Braudy, Leo. *The Frenzy of Renown: Fame & Its History* (New York and Oxford: UP, 1986)
- Briggs, Peter M. ‘Daniel Mendoza and sporting celebrity: a case study’, in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture 1750-1850*, ed. by Tom Mole (Cambridge: UP, 2009), pp. 103-119.
- Brockington, Dan. *Celebrity Advocacy and International Development* (Oxon: Routledge, 2014)
- Buchanan, Judith. *Shakespeare on Film* (Harlow: Longman-Pearson, 2005)
- . *Shakespeare on Silent Film: An Excellent Dumb Discourse* (Cambridge: UP, 2009)

- Burrows, Jon. *Legitimate Cinema: Theatre Stars in Silent British Films, 1908-1918* (Exeter: UP, 2003)
- . *The British Cinema Boom, 1909-1914: A Commercial History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2017)
- . and Richard Brown, 'Financing the Edwardian Cinema Boom, 1909–1914', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio & Television*, 30.1 (2010), pp. 1-20
- Button, Marilyn D. and Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen, 'Introduction: Injurious Charity', in *Victorians and the Case for Charity: Essays on Responses to English Poverty by the State, the Church and the Literati*, ed. by Marilyn D. Button and Jessica A. Sheetz-Nguyen (Jefferson, North Carolina, and London: McFarland, 2014), pp. 5-20
- Calvo, Clara. 'Shakespeare as War Memorial: Remembrance and Commemoration in the Great War', in *Shakespeare Survey*, ed. by Peter Holland (Cambridge: UP, 2010), pp. 198-211. <doi:10.1017/CCOL9780521769150.017>
- Campbell, Mrs. Patrick. *My Life and Some Letters* (New York: Dodd & Mead, 1922) in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/stream/mylifesomeletter00camp/mylifesomeletter00camp_djvu.txt>
- Carlson, Marvin. *The Haunted Stage: The Theatre as Memory Machine* (Michigan: UP, 2003)
- Carlson, Susan. 'The Suffrage Shrew: The Shakespeare Festival, "A Man's Play," and New Women', in *Shakespeare and the Twentieth Century: The Selected Proceedings of the International Shakespeare Association World Congress, Los Angeles*, ed. by Jonathan Bate and others (London: Associated UP, 1996), pp. 85-102
- Chothia, Jean. *English Drama of the Early Modern Period, 1890-1940* (London & New York: Routledge, 2014)
- Cochrane, Claire. *Twentieth-Century British Theatre. Industry, Art and Empire* (Cambridge: UP, 2011)
- Cohen, Deborah. *The War Come Home: Disabled Veterans in Britain and Germany, 1914-1939* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 2001)
- Collins, L. J. *Theatre at War, 1914-1918* (London: Macmillan, 1998)
- Cooper, Andrew. *Celebrity Diplomacy* (London: Paradigm Publishers, 2008)
- Cox, Howard. *The Global Cigarette: Origins and Evolution of British American Tobacco 1880-1945* (Oxford: UP, 2000)
- Crawford, Elizabeth. *The Women's Suffrage Movement: A Reference Guide. 1866-1928* (London: UCL Press, 1999)

- Daniel. Edward Morton. *The Trade Marks Registration Act, 1875: and the rules thereunder, with introd., notes, and practical directions as to registering trade marks : together with the Merchandise Marks Act, 1862, with notes and a copious index to the whole*, (London: Stevens & Haynes, 1876), in <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/010476075>.
- Darby, Nell. *Life on the Victorian Stage: Theatrical Gossip* (South Yorkshire: Pen & Sword History, 2017)
- Davis, Jim and Victor Emeljanow. *Reflecting the Audience: London Theatregoing, 1840-1880*, (Hertfordshire: UP, 2001)
- . ‘Victorian and Edwardian audiences.’ in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. by Kerry Powell. (Cambridge: UP, 2004)
- Davis. Tracy, C. *Actresses as Working Women: Their Social Identity in Victorian Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991 repr. 2002)
- . *The Economics of the British Stage 1800-1914* (Cambridge: UP, 2000)
- deCordova, Richard. *Picture Personalities: the Emergence of the Star System in America* (Illinois: UP, 1990 repr. 2001)
- Dent, Alan. *Mrs. Patrick Campbell* (London: Museum Press, 1961)
- Derrida, Jacques. *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning and the New International* (New York and London: Routledge, 1994)
- Dictionary of Nineteenth-century Journalism in Great Britain and Ireland*, ed. by Laurel Brake and Marysa Demoor (Gent: Academia Press, 2009)
- Dolgin, Ellen Ecker. *Shaw and the Actresses Franchise League: Staging Equality* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2015)
- Donaldson, Frances. *The Actor-Managers* (Chicago: Regnery, 1970)
- Drake, Philip and Michael Higgins. ‘‘I’m a celebrity, get me into politics’: The political celebrity and celebrity politician’, in *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 87- 100.
- Duncan, Sophie. *Shakespeare’s Women and the Fin de Siecle* (Oxford: UP, 2016)
- Dyer, Richard. *Stars* (London: BFI Publishing, 1979 repr. 1998)
- Eilenberg, Lawrence Ira. ‘Johnston Forbes-Robertson: Actor-Manager A Study of His Theatrical Style’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, Yale University, May 1975)
- Eltis, Sos. ‘Private Lives and Public Spaces: Reputation, Celebrity and the Late Victorian Actress’ in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain 1660-2000*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 169-188, Eblib ebook

- Emaljanow, Victor. 'Palliative Pantomimes: Entertainments in Prisoner-of-War Camps', in *British Theatre and the Great War, 1914-1918. New Perspectives*, ed. Andrew Maunder (New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), e-book, pp. 251- 268
- Engel, Laura. 'The Muff Affair: Fashioning Celebrity in the Portraits of Late-eighteenth-century British Actresses', *Fashion Theory*, 13:3 (2009), 279-298, DOI: 10.2752/175174109X438136
- Esslin, Martin. 'Modern Theatre: 1890-1920', in *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, ed. by John Russell Brown (Oxford: UP, 2001), pp. 341-379
- Farrar, J. M. *Mary Anderson: the Story of her Life and Professional Career* (New York: N. L. Munro, 1885), in *Internet Archive* <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/14758/14758-h/14758-h.htm>
- Ferguson, Ailsa Grant. 'Entertaining the Anzacs: Performances for Australian and New Zealand Troops on Leave in London, 1916-1919', in *British Theatre and the Great War, 1914-1918. New Perspectives*, ed. by Andrew Maunder (New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), e-book, pp. 234-250
- . 'Lady Forbes-Robertson's war work: Gertrude Elliott and the Shakespeare Hut performances, 1916-1919', in *Women Making Shakespeare*, ed. by Gordon McMullan and Lena Orlin (London: Bloomsbury, The Arden Shakespeare, 2014), e-book, pp. 233-242
- . 'Performing commemoration in wartime: Shakespeare galas in London, 1916-1919', in *Celebrating Shakespeare: Commemoration and Cultural Memory*, ed. By Clara Calvo and Coppélia Kahn (Cambridge: UP, 2015), pp. 202-224
- . *Shakespeare, Cinema, Counter-Culture: Appropriation and Inversion* (Routledge: New York and Oxon, 2016)
- . "'When Wasteful War Shall Statues Overturn": Forgetting the Shakespeare Hut', *Shakespeare* 10(3), 2014, pp. 276-292 <doi.org/10.1080/17450918.2014.926976> [accessed 10 July 2014]
- Findlater, Richard. *6 Great Actors* (London: Hamilton, 1957)
- Fisher, Tony. *Theatre and Governance in Britain, 1500-1900: Democracy, Disorder and the State* (Cambridge: UP, 2017)
- Fitzmaurice, N (ed.). *Family Legends* (London: Satin Publishing, 2016)
- Fleck, A. 'Technology and Its Consequences', in *A History of Technology, Vol. 5: The Late 19th Century* (London: Oxford UP, 1958)
- Forbes-Robertson, Diana. *Maxine* (London: Hamilton, 1964)

- Forbes-Robertson, Johnston. *A Player Under Three Reigns* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1925)
- Fostekew, Jean M. *Blossom: A Biography of Mrs F. G. Miles* (Dorset: Cirrus, 1998)
- Foulkes, Nick. *Scandalous Society: Passion and Celebrity in the Nineteenth Century* (London: Abacus, 2004)
- Freshwater, Helen. *Theatre and Audience* (Palgrave Macmillan: Hampshire, 2009)
- Friederichs, Hulda. *The Life of Sir George Newnes* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1911), in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/lifeofsirgeorgen00frierich>
- Gamson, Joshua. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994)
- Gemünden, Gerd. 'Allegories of Displacement: Conrad Veidt's British Films', in *Destination London: German-speaking Emigrés and British Cinema, 1925-1950*, ed. by Tim Bergfelder and Christian Cargnell (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2008), pp. 142-154
- Gielgud, John. *Shakespeare – Hit or Miss?* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1991)
- Gilbert, Martin. *The First World War: A Complete History* (New York: Holt, 1994)
- Graham, Ian. *Herbert Brenon: An American Cinema Odyssey* (Independently published, 2017)
- Grant, Peter. *Philanthropy and Voluntary Action in the First World War: Mobilizing Charity* (Oxon and New York: Routledge, 2014)
- Guest, Kirsten. 'Culture, Class, and Colonialism: the Struggle for an English National Theatre, 1879-1913', in *Journal of Victorian Culture*, 11:2, pp. 281-300, DOI: 10.3366/jvc.2006.11.2.281.
- Guyunn, Beth Ann. 'Postcard', in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol I*, ed. by John Hannavy (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 1162-1164
- Hamlet, by William Shakespeare as arranged for the stage by Forbes Robertson and Presented at The Lyceum Theatre on Saturday, September 11, 1897* (London: The Nassau Press, 1897)
- Hammond, Michael. *The Big Show: British Cinema Culture in the Great War 1914-1918* (Exeter: UP, 2006)
- . and Michael Williams, 'Goodbye to All That or Business as Usual? History and Memory of the Great War in British Cinema', in *British Silent Cinema and the Great War*, ed. by Michael Hammond and Michael Williams, (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 1-18
- Hannavy, John. *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography* (London: Routledge, 2008)

- Hawkins, Virgil. 'Creating a Groundswell or Getting on the Bandwagon? Celebrities, the Media and Distant Conflict', in *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* ed. by Liza Tsaliki and others (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011), pp. 85-104
- Heinrich, Anselm. 'Reclaiming Shakespeare 1914–1918', in *British Theatre and the Great War, 1914-1918. New Perspectives*, ed. by Andrew Maunder (New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), e-book, pp. 65-80
- Hellman, Jesse. M. 'Lady Hamilton, *Nelson's Enchantress*, and the Creation of Pygmalion', in *The Journal of Bernard Shaw Studies*, Vol. 35 No. 2, 2015, pp. 213-237
- Hendley, Matthew. C. *Organized Patriotism and the Crucible of War: Popular Imperialism in Britain, 1914-1932* (McGill-Queen's UP, 2012)
- Hepworth, Cecil. *Came the Dawn: Memories of a Film Pioneer* (London: Phoenix House, 1951)
- Higson, Andrew. 'Cecil Hepworth, *Alice in Wonderland* and the Development of the Narrative Film', in *Young and innocent? The Cinema in Britain 1896-1930* ed. by Andrew Higson (Exeter: UP, 2002), pp. 42-64
- . 'The Heritage Film, British Cinema, and the National Past: *Comin' Thro' The Rye*' in *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* ed. by Andrew Higson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995), pp. 29-45
- . *Waving the Flag: Constructing a National Cinema in Britain* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1995)
- . *Young and Innocent? The Cinema in Britain 1896-1930* (Exeter: UP, 2002)
- Hiley, Nicholas. "'At the Picture Palace": The British Cinema Audience, 1895-1920', in *Celebrating 1895: the Centenary of Cinema*, ed. by John Fullerton (London: John Libbey, 1998), pp. 96-103
- . 'Nothing more than a "craze"': cinema building in Britain from 1909 to 1914', in *Young and innocent? The Cinema in Britain 1896-1930*, ed. by Andrew Higson (Exeter: UP, 2002), pp. 111-127
- . 'The Battle of the Somme and British News Media' (Péronne: Centre de Recherche de L'Historial de la Grande Guerre, 21 July 1992)
- Hilton, Matthew. *Smoking in British Popular Culture, 1800-2000* (Manchester: UP, 2000)
- Hindson, Catherine. 'Heritage, Capital and Culture: The Ghost of 'Sarah' at the Bristol Old Vic', in *Theatre and Ghosts: Materiality, Performance and Modernity* ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 82-95
- . *London's West End Actresses and the Origins of Celebrity Charity, 1880-1920* (Iowa: UP, 2016)

- Hirshfield, Claire. 'The Actresses' Franchise League and the Campaign for Women's Suffrage, 1908-1914', *Theatre Research International*, 10(2), 1985, 129-153
<doi:10.1017/S030788330001066X> [accessed 10 July 2017]
- Holder, Stephen. 'The Stewart & Woolf Silhouettes', in *Picture Postcard Monthly*, December 2010
- Holledge, Julie. *Innocent Flowers: Women in the Edwardian Theatre* (London: Hachette Digital, 1981), E-book
- Holmes, Su and Sean Redmond, eds. *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture* (London: Routledge, 2006)
- . 'Introduction', in *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 1-16
- Holroyd, Michael. *A Strange Dramatic History: The Dramatic Lives of Ellen Terry, Henry Irving and their Remarkable Families* (London: Vintage, 2009)
- Huliaras, Asteris and Nikolaos Tzifakis. 'Bringing the Individuals Back In? Celebrities as Transnational Activists', in *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* ed. by Liza Tsaliki and others (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011), pp. 27-44
- Inglis, Fred. *A Short History of Celebrity* (Princeton: UP, 2010), E-book
- Jackson, Russell. *Plays by Henry Arthur Jones* (Cambridge: UP, 1982)
- Jenkins, Rebecca. *Fanny Kemble: A Reluctant Celebrity* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2005)
- Jermyn, Deborah. "'Bringing out the ★ in you": SJP, Carrie Bradshaw and the evolution of television stardom', in *Framing Celebrity: New Directions in Celebrity Culture*, ed. by Su Holmes and Sean Redmond (London: Routledge, 2006), pp. 67-85
- Jones, Henry Arthur. *The Renaissance of the English Drama: essays, lectures, and fragments relating to the modern English stage* (London and New York: Macmillan, 1895), in *Internet Archive*,
<https://archive.org/stream/renascenceofengl00joneuoft#page/n17/mode/2up>
- Kahan, Jeffrey. *Bettymania and the Birth of Celebrity Culture* (Pennsylvania: Lehigh UP, 2010), Eblib ebook
- Kelly, Katherine. 'The Actresses' Franchise League Prepares For War: Feminist Theatre in Camouflage', *Theatre Survey*, 35(1), 1994, 121-137. <doi:10.1017/S004055740000260X> [accessed 10 July 2017]

- Kennedy, Dennis. 'British Theatre, 1895–1946: Art, Entertainment, Audiences – an Introduction', in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre Volume 3: Since 1895*, ed. by Baz Kershaw (Cambridge: UP, 2004 repr. 2008), pp. 1-33, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/CHOL9780521651325>.
- Kift, Dagmar. *The Victorian Music Hall: Culture, Class and Conflict*, trans. by Roy Kift (Cambridge: UP, 1996)
- King, Barry. *Taking Fame to Market: On the Pre-History and Post-History of Hollywood Stardom* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015)
- Knowles, Ric. *Reading the Material Theatre* (Cambridge: UP, 2004)
- Knox, William W. J. *Lives of Scottish Women: Women and Scottish Society, 1800-1980* (Edinburgh: UP, 2006)
- Kudly, Jenna. L. 'J. M. Barrie and World War I', in *Humor, Entertainment, and Popular Culture During World War I*, ed. by C. Tholas-Disset and others (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), pp. 197-208
- Latham, Bethany. *Elizabeth I in Film and Television: A Study of the Major Portrayals* (North Carolina: McFarland, 2011)
- Lawrence, M. *Shadow of Swords: a Biography of Elsie Inglis* (London: Michael Joseph, 1971)
- Leask, Margaret. *Lena Ashwell: Actress, Patriot, Pioneer* (Hertfordshire: UP, 2012)
- . 'Lena Ashwell: Touring Concert Parties and Arts Advocacy, 1914-1919', in *British Theatre and the Great War, 1914-1918. New Perspectives*, ed. by Andrew Maunder (New York and Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), e-book, pp. 251- 268
- Ledger, Edward. 'Music Halls In The United Kingdom', *The Era Almanack*, 1900, *ProQuest*, <https://search-proquest-com.libproxy.ncl.ac.uk/docview/6971367?accountid=12753>, pp. 91-92
- Levy, Babette May. "'The High Bid" and the Forbes-Robertsons', *College English*, 8(6), 1947, pp. 284–292, www.jstor.org/stable/370719
- Lilti, Antoine. (trans. Lynn Jeffers), *The Invention of Celebrity, 1750-1850* (Cambridge: Polity, 2017)
- 'LOUGHEED, Sir JAMES ALEXANDER', in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography*, ed. by David J. Hall and Donald B. Smith, vol. 15 (University of Toronto/Université Laval, 2003–), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio/lougheed_james_alexander_15E.html [accessed 5 March 2019]

- Low, Rachel. *The History of British Film 1906-1914 (Vol. 2)* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1949)
- Lowenthal, Leo. *Literature, Popular Culture, and Society*, (California: Pacific Books, 1944 repr. 1961)
- Luckhurst, Mary and Emilie Morin, 'Introduction: Theatre and Spectrality', in *Theatre and Ghosts: Materiality, Performance and Modernity*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Emilie Morin, (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014), pp. 1-26
- . 'Introduction: The Singularity of Theatrical Celebrity.', in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain 1660-2000*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 1-11, Eblib ebook
- Manvell, Roger. *Ellen Terry* (London: Heinemann, 1968)
- Marshall, P. David. *Celebrity and Power: Fame in Contemporary Culture*. (Minneapolis and London: University of Minnesota Press, 1997 repr. 2014)
- Mayer, David. "'Quote the Words to Prompt the Attitudes': The Victorian Performer, the Photographer, and the Photograph", *Theatre Survey*, 3(2), 2002, pp 223-251, <doi:10.1017/S0040557402000121>
- Mazer, Cary M. 'H. Granville Barker', in *Poel, Granville Barker, Guthrie, Wanamaker. Great Shakespeareans. Volume XV*, ed. by Cary M. Mazer (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), E-book, pp. 55-97
- . 'New Theatres for a New Drama'. in *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre*, ed. by Kerry Powell. (Cambridge: UP, 2004), pp. 207-221
- . 'Treasons, Stratagems, and Spoils: Edwardian Actor-Managers and the Shakespeare Memorial National Theatre', *Theatre Survey*, 24(1-2), 1-33, 1983
doi:10.1017/S004055740000003X
- McClintock, Anne. 'Soft-Soaping Empire: Commodity Racism and Imperial Advertising', in *Travellers' Tales: Narratives of Home and Displacement*, ed. by George Robertson, (London: Routledge, 1994), pp. 131-154
- McCracken, Grant. 'Who Is the Celebrity Endorser? Cultural Foundations of the Endorsement Process', *Journal Of Consumer Research*, 16.3 (December 1989), 310-321 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2489512>> [accessed 2 April 2017]
- McDonough, John and Karen Egolf, *The Advertising Age Encyclopedia of Advertising* (London and Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publisher, 2002)

- McEvoy, Sean. *Theatrical Unrest: Ten Riots in the History of the Stage, 1601-2004* (Oxon: Routledge, 2016)
- McKernan, Luke. 'A Complete and Fully Satisfying Art on Its Own Account': Cinema and the Shakespeare Tercentenary of 1916', *Shakespeare*, 3:3, (2007), 337-351, DOI: [10.1080/17450910701692021](https://doi.org/10.1080/17450910701692021)
- . and Olwen Terris, *Walking Shadows: Shakespeare in the National Film and Television Archive* (London: BFI, 1994)
- McPherson, Heather. 'Siddons rediviva: death, memory and theatrical afterlife', in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture 1750-1850*, ed. by Tom Mole (Cambridge: UP, 2009), pp. 120-140
- Mills, C. Wright. *The Power Elite* (New York: Oxford UP, 1956 repr. 2000)
- Mitch, David. 'The Spread of Literacy in Nineteenth-Century England,' *The Journal of Economic History*, 1.43 (1983), 287–288, doi:10.1017/S0022050700029326.
- Mole, Tom. *Byron's Romantic Celebrity: Industrial Culture and the Hermeneutic of Intimacy* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007)
- . 'Introduction', in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture 1750-1850*, ed. by Tom Mole (Cambridge: UP, 2009), pp. 1-18
- . (ed.) *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture 1750-1850* (Cambridge: UP, 2009)
- Monks, Aoife. 'Introduction', in *Costume: Readings in Theatre Practice* ed. by Ali Maclaurin and Aoife Monks (London and New York: Palgrave Macmillan Education, 2015), pp. 1-6
- Montgomery, H. B. 'Kinematograph Finance in 1913', in *Kinematograph Year Book Diary and Directory* (London: The Kinematograph & Lantern Weekly, 1914), pp. 17-21
- Moody, Paul. "'Improper Practices" in Great War British Cinemas'. in *British Silent Cinema and the Great War*, ed. by Michael Hammond and Michael Williams (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 49-63
- Morgan, Simon. 'Celebrity: Academic 'Pseudo-Event' or a Useful Concept for Historians?', *Celebrity, Cultural and Social History*, 8:1, (2011), 95-114, DOI: [10.2752/147800411X12858412044474](https://doi.org/10.2752/147800411X12858412044474)
- Morrison, Michael A. *John Barrymore: Shakespearean Actor* (Cambridge: UP, 1997)
- Murray, Martin. *The Story of Cigarette Cards* (London: Murray Cards, 1987)
- Newton, H. Chance. (Carados). *Cues and Curtain Calls* (London: John Lane The Bodley Head Limited, 1927)
- Nicoll, Allardyce. *A History of Late Nineteenth Century Drama: 1850-1900, Vol. 1* (Cambridge: UP, 1946), in *Internet Archive*, <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.509588>

- Nussbaum, Felicity. 'Actresses and the Economics of Celebrity, 1700-1800', in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain 1660-2000*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 148-168, Eblib ebook.
- O'Connor, Marion. 'William Poel', in *Poel, Granville Barker, Guthrie, Wanamaker: Great Shakespeareans. Volume XV*. ed. by Cary Mazer (London & New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), pp. 7-54, E-book
- Oxford Dictionary of Art, Third Ed*, ed. by Ian Chilvers (Oxford: UP, 2004)
- Pearson, Hesketh. *The Last Actor Managers* (London: Methuen, 1950)
- Perkin, Harold. *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989 repr. 2002)
- Peters, Margot. *Mrs Pat: The Life of Mrs Patrick Campbell* (London: The Bodley Head, 1984)
- Pleios, George. 'Fame and Symbolic Value in Celebrity Activism and Diplomacy', in *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* ed. by Liza Tsaliki and others (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011), pp. 249-262
- Plunkett, John. 'Carte-de-Visite', in *Encyclopedia of Nineteenth-Century Photography, Vol I*, ed. by John Hannavy (New York: Routledge, 2008), pp. 276-277
- Postle, Martin. *Joshua Reynolds: the Creation of Celebrity* (London: Tate, 2005)
- Prettejohn, Elizabeth. 'Introduction', in *After the Pre-Raphaelites: Art and Aestheticism in Victorian England*, ed. by Elizabeth Prettejohn (Manchester: UP, 1999), pp 1-16
- Quinn, Michael L. 'Celebrity and the Semiotics of Acting', *NTQ*, 6 (1990), 154-161
- Rabushka, Alvin. *From Adam Smith to the Wealth of America* (New Brunswick and Oxford: Transaction Books, 1985)
- Rayner, Alice. *Ghosts: Death's Double and the Phenomena of Theatre* (Minneapolis and London: UP, 2006)
- Riall, Lucy. 'Garibaldi: the first celebrity', *History Today*, 57(8) (2007), 41-47
- Richards, Jeffrey. *Sir Henry Irving: A Victorian Actor and His World* (London: Hambledon and London, 2005)
- . *The Ancient World on the Victorian and Edwardian Stage* (Hampshire and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)
- Ritchie, Leslie. *David Garrick and the Mediation of Celebrity* (Cambridge: UP, 2019), Google ebook
- Roach, Joseph. *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York and Chichester: Columbia UP, 1996)

- . ‘Public Intimacy’ The Prior History of ‘It’, in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain 1660-2000*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 15-30, Eblib ebook.
- Roberts, Mary Louise. ‘Rethinking Female Celebrity: The Eccentric Star of Nineteenth-Century France’, in *Constructing Charisma: Celebrity, Fame, and Power in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, ed. by Edward Berenson and Eva Giloi (New York and Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2010), pp. 103-116
- Rojek, Chris. *Celebrity* (London: Reaktion Books, 2001 repr. 2004), Eblib ebook
- Rosenberg, Marvin. *The Masks of Hamlet* (London and Ontario: Associated UP, 1992)
- Rosenthal, Daniel. *The National Theatre Story* (London: Oberon Books, 2013), e-book
- Salmon, Richard. ‘Signs of Intimacy: The Literary Celebrity in the “Age of Interviewing”’, *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 25(1), (1997), pp. 159-177.
- Schickel, Richard. *Intimate Strangers: The Culture of Celebrity in America* (Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 1985 repr. 2000)
- Scott, Varihi. ‘Big Dog Celebrity Activists: Barking up the Wrong Tree’, in *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* ed. by Liza Tsaliki and others (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011), pp. 279-294
- Seaman, L. C. B. *Victorian England: Aspects of English and Imperial History 1837-1901* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002)
- Seaton, A. V. ‘Cope's and the Promotion of Tobacco in Victorian England’, *European Journal of Marketing*, 20(9), (1986), pp. 5 - 26
<<http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/EUM00000000004664>>
- Shail, Andrew. *The Origins of the Film Star System: Persona, Publicity and Economics in Early Cinema* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019)
- Shakespeare, William. *Julius Caesar*. ed. by Marvin Spevack (Cambridge: UP, 2008)
- Shaw, George Bernard. ‘Cymbeline’, *Saturday Review*, 22 September 1896, reprinted in *Dramatic Opinions and Essays with an Apology, Vol. II* ed. by James Huneker (New York: Brentano, 1906), in *Internet Archive*
https://archive.org/stream/BlamingTheBard/shaw_george_bernard_blaming_the_bard_djvu.txt, pp. 51-59
- . ‘For England, Home and Beauty’, in *Dramatic Opinions and Essays with an Apology. Volume II* (New York: Brentano, 1911 repr. 1922), in *Internet Archive*

- https://archive.org/stream/DramaticOpinionsAndEssaysVolume2/shaw_george_bernard_dramatic_opinions_and_essays_vol_2#page/n89/mode/2up/search/romeo, pp. 145-150
- . ‘Hamlet’, in *Our Theatres in the Nineties, Vol. III* (London: Constable, 1932), in *Internet Archive* <https://archive.org/details/in.ernet.dli.2015.79683>, pp. 200-207
- . ‘Michael and His Lost Angel’, in *Dramatic opinions and essays... Vol. I* (New York: Brentano, 1906), in *Internet Archive* https://archive.org/stream/dramaticopinions01shawuoft/dramaticopinions01shawuoft_djvu.txt, pp. 309-326
- . ‘The New Magda and the New Cyprienne’, in *Dramatic Opinions and Essays with an Apology. Volume II* (New York: Brentano, 1911 repr. 1922), in *Internet Archive* https://archive.org/stream/DramaticOpinionsAndEssaysVolume2/shaw_george_bernard_dramatic_opinions_and_essays_vol_2#page/n89/mode/2up/search/romeo, pp. 4-11
- . ‘The Second Dating of Sheridan’, in *Dramatic Opinions and Essays with an Apology. Volume II* (New York: Brentano, 1911 repr. 1922), in *Internet Archive* https://archive.org/stream/DramaticOpinionsAndEssaysVolume2/shaw_george_bernard_dramatic_opinions_and_essays_vol_2#page/n89/mode/2up/search/romeo, pp. 22-28
- Shearer, Moira. *Ellen Terry* (Gloucestershire: Sutton Publishing, 1998)
- Sheen, Marguerite. *A Pride of Terrys* (London: Longmans, 1962, repr. Endeavour Media, 2018), Kindle e-book
- Short, Ernest. *Sixty Years of Theatre* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1951)
- Sizeranne, Robert de la. *The Pre-Raphaelites* (New York: Parkstone International, 2014), Kindle e-book
- Slide, Anthony. *A Special Relationship: Britain Comes to Hollywood and Hollywood Comes to Britain* (Jackson: UP of Missouri, 2015)
- Smialkowska, Monika. ‘Conscripting Caliban: Shakespeare, America, and the First World War’, in *Shakespeare*, 7:2, (2011), 192-207, <10.1080/17450918.2011.573090> [accessed 20 September 2017]
- Smith, Donald B. *Calgary’s Grand Story* (Calgary: UP, 2005)
- Smith, Emma. “‘Sir J. and Lady Forbes-Robertson left for America on Saturday’: marketing the 1913 *Hamlet* for stage and screen’, in *Moving Performance: British Stage and Screen. 1890s-1920s*, ed. by Linda Fitzsimmons and Sarah Street (Wiltshire: Flicks Books, 2000), pp 44-53
- Stallworthy, Jon. *Wilfred Owen* (Oxford: UP, 1974 repr. 1998)

- St. Clare Byrne, Muriel. 'Fifty Years of Shakespearean Production: 1898 – 1948', in *Shakespeare Survey 2*, ed. by Allardyce Nicoll (Cambridge: UP, 1949) pp. 1-20
- Stohl, Michael, Cynthia Stohl, and Rachel Stohl, 'Linking Small Arms, Child Soldiers, NGOs and Celebrity Activism: Nicolas Cage and the *Lord of War*', in *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* ed. by Liza Tsaliki and others (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011), pp. 213-229
- Stoker, Bram. *Personal Reminiscences of Henry Irving* (London: Heinemann, 1906) in *Internet Archive* <https://archive.org/details/personalreminisc00stokiala/page/n8>
- Street, John. 'Celebrity Politicians: Popular Culture and Political Representation', *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 6.4 (November 2004), 435 – 452 <
[10.1111/j.1467-856X.2004.00149.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2004.00149.x)> [accessed 20 March 2017]
- . 'Do Celebrity Politics and Celebrity Politicians Matter?', *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations*, 14.3 (January 2012), 346-356 <
[10.1111/j.1467-856X.2011.00480.x](https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-856X.2011.00480.x)> [accessed 20 March 2017]
- . *Mass Media, Politics & Democracy 2nd Edition* (Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011)
- 'Table XIV. Population of Cities and Towns having 4,000 inhabitants and over in 1911 compared with 1871-81-91-1901', in *Fifth Census of Canada 1911, Areas and Population by Provinces, Districts and Subdistricts, Vol. 1* (Ottawa: Government of Canada, 1912), http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2016/statcan/CS98-1911-1.pdf, [accessed 31 May 2019]
- Tait, Sue. 'Consuming Ethics: Conflict Diamonds, the Entertainment Industry and Celebrity Activism', in *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* ed. by Liza Tsaliki and others (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011), pp. 157-174
- Terry, Ellen. *The Story of my Life Recollections and Reflections* (New York: Doubleday, 1908) in *Internet Archive* <<https://archive.org/details/storymylifereco00terrgoog>> [accessed 1 October 2014]
- The Collected Letters of Ellen Terry, Vol 1: 1865-1888*, ed. by Katharine Cockin (London and New York: Routledge, 2016)
- The Stage Year Book* (London: Carson & Comerford, 1916) in *Internet Archive* https://archive.org/stream/stageyearbook1916londuoft/stageyearbook1916londuoft_djvu.txt [accessed 30 July 2017]
- Thomas, Lowell. *Adventures Among Immortals* (London: Hutchinson, 1938)

- Thornbury, Walter. *Old and New London: Volume 3* (London: Cassell, Petter & Galpin, 1878,) pp. 218-227, in *British History Online* <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/old-new-london/vol3/pp218-227>, [accessed 7 April 2019]
- Thrall, A. Trevor and others, 'Star Power: Celebrity Advocacy and the Evolution of the Public Sphere', *The International Journal of Press/Politics*, 13.4 (June 2008), 362-385 <[10.1177/1940161208319098](https://doi.org/10.1177/1940161208319098)> [accessed 22 March 2017]
- Totman, Sally. 'The Emergence of the "Super-Celebrity Activist": George Clooney and Angelina Jolie', in *Becoming Brands: Celebrity, Activism and Politics*. ed. By Jackie Raphael and Celia Lam (Toronto: Waterhill Publishing, 2017), pp. 21-31
- Trewin, Wendy. *The Royal General Theatrical Fund* (London: The Society for Theatre Research, 1989)
- Trussler, Simon. *The Cambridge Illustrated History of British Theatre* (Cambridge: UP, 1994)
- Tsaliki, Liza. And others. *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011)
- Turner, Graeme. *Understanding Celebrity* (London: SAGE Publications, 2001)
- Tylee, Claire. 'A better world for both': men, cultural transformation and the suffragettes', in *The Women's Suffrage Movement: New Feminist Perspectives*, ed. by Maroula Joannou and June Purvis (Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 1998), pp. 140-156
- Uricchio, William and Roberta E Pearson, *Reframing Culture: The Case of the Vitagraph Quality Films* (Princeton: UP, 1993)
- Vanbrugh, Irene. *To Tell My Story* (London: Hutchinson, 1949)
- van Krieken, Robert. *Celebrity Society* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), Kindle ebook
- Vincent, David. *Literacy and Popular Culture: England 1750-1914* (Cambridge: UP, 1989 repr. 1993)
- Wanko, Cheryl. 'Patron or patronised?: 'fans' and the eighteenth-century English stage', in *Romanticism and Celebrity Culture 1750-1850*, ed. by Tom Mole (Cambridge: UP, 2009), pp. 209-226
- Warren, Low. 'Important Film Subjects of the Year,' in *Kinematograph Year Book Diary and Directory* (London: The Kinematograph & Lantern Weekly, 1914), pp. 30-32
- Wentworth, Marion Craig. 'Introduction', in *War Plays by Women: An International Anthology*, ed. by Claire M. Tylee, Elaine Turner, and Agnès Cardinal (Oxon: Routledge, 1999), pp. 13-26
- West, Darrell M. and John Orman. *Celebrity Politics* (New Jersey: Pearson Education, 2003)

- West, Shearer. 'Siddons, Celebrity and Regality: Portraiture and the Body of the Ageing Actress', in *Theatre and Celebrity in Britain 1660-2000*, ed. by Mary Luckhurst and Jane Moody (Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), pp. 191-213, Eblib ebook
- . 'The Public and Private Roles of Sarah Siddons', in *A Passion for Performance: Sarah Siddons and her Portraitists*, ed. by Robyn Asleson (LA: The J Paul Getty Museum, 1999), pp. 1-40, Google ebook
- Wheeler, Mark. 'Celebrity Politics and Cultural Citizenship: UN Goodwill Ambassadors and Messengers of Peace', in *Transnational Celebrity Activism in Global Politics: Changing the World?* ed. by Liza Tsaliki and others (Bristol and Chicago: Intellect, 2011), pp. 45-62
- . *Celebrity Politics: Image and Identity in Contemporary Political Communications*. (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013)
- . *Hollywood Politics and Society* (London: BFI, 2006)
- Whitten, D.O and Whitten, B. E. *The Birth of Big Business in the United States, 1860-1914: Commercial, Extractive and Industrial Enterprise* (Connecticut: Praeger Publishers, 2006)
- Williamson, Milly. *Celebrity: Capitalism and the Making of Fame* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016)
- Winter, William. *The Stage Life of Mary Anderson* (New York: Coombes, 1886) in *Internet Archive* <https://archive.org/details/stagelifeofmarya00wint>. [accessed 20 December 2018]
- Woodfield, James. *English Theatre in Transition, English Theatre in Transition, 1881-1914* (London and New York: Routledge, 1984)
- Zieger, Robert H. *America's Great War: World War I and the American Experience* (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2000), pp. 14-17

Websites

- 'Award-winning Kenneth Branagh becomes our new President', 30 September 2015, in <https://www.rada.ac.uk/about-us/news-and-press/award-winning-kenneth-branagh-becomes-our-new-president/>, [accessed 3 April 2020]
- Cliff, Tony and Donny Gluckstein. 'The Labour Party: A Marxist History', July 1996 (October 1988), in <https://marxists.org/archive/cliff/works/1988/labour.html>, [accessed 1 November 2017]
- Cumming, Alan. 'Scottish Women's Hospitals', 2013, in <http://scottishwomenshospitals.co.uk>, [accessed 17 July 2017]

Jensen, Michael P. 'Hamlet, 1913', 2009, in http://michaelpjensen.com/home_page/hamlet_1913, [accessed 1 March 2019]
'Joshua Reynolds: the Creation of Celebrity', 2005, in <http://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-britain/exhibition/joshua-reynolds-creation-celebrity>, [accessed 9 November 2017]
'Our Year in Numbers', 2019, in <http://review.nationaltheatre.org.uk/#2019/productions/129>, [accessed 3 April 2020]
'Sign up', 2020, in <https://www.equity.org.uk> [accessed 3 April 2020]

Film and TV

Gaumont Graphic No. 738 'Our American Guests' (18 April 1918)
Hamlet, dir. by Hay Plumb (Hepworth Company, 1913)
Masks and Faces, dir. by Fred Paul (Ideal, 1917)
The Passing of the Third Floor Back, dir. by Herbert Brenon (First National Pictures, 1918)
Topical Budget 351-2 'American Labour Delegates's Visit to the Fleet' (20 May 1918)

Newspaper articles

'A Barrie Afternoon', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 June 1915
'Academy of Art', *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 8 January 1909
'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Era*, 27 July 1907
'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Era*, 5 July 1916
'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Era*, 12 March 1919
'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 7 June 1893
'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Globe*, 26 April 1904
'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Morning Post*, 21 July 1906
'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Morning Post*, 23 July 1907
'Academy of Dramatic Art', *Stage*, 1 April 1920
'A Chat with Forbes-Robertson', *Era*, 4 November 1899
'Actors' Benevolent Fund', *Era*, 12 January 1884
'Actors' Benevolent Fund', *Era*, 19 June 1886
'Actors' Benevolent Fund', *Era*, 23 March 1893

‘Actor’s Return. Mr. Forbes Robertson on his U.S. Tour and Plans’, *London Daily News*, 7 May 1912

‘Actresses and the Franchise’, *Era*, 8 March 1913

‘Actresses and the Vote. A New Franchise League’, *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 18 December 1908

‘Actresses and the Vote. New Movement Inauguration’, *Nottingham Evening Post*, 18 December 1908

‘Actresses At the Bar’, *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 20 December 1912

‘Actress Suffragists. Stage Celebrities Demand the Vote’, *London Evening Standard*, 18 December 1908

‘A Declaration of Faith’, *Votes for Women*, 11 February 1909

‘A Dramatic Academy’, *Glasgow Evening Post*, 10 March 1893

Advertisement, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 28 December 1908

Advertisement, *Wigan Observer*, 23 July 1884

Advertisement, *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 16 June 1917

Advertisements, *Bioscope*, 21 December 1911

‘A Great Victorian’, *Belfast Telegraph*, 31 January 1953

‘A Lady’s London Letter’, *Cheltenham Examiner*, 27 March 1889

Alexander, M. ‘Women and Votes’, *Northern Whig*, 10 April 1913

‘Allied Bazaar in New York’, *Scotsman*, 30 November 1917

‘All-Star Day at Elstree’, *Bioscope*, 7 December 1916

‘A Memorial to the Commons’, *Daily Herald*, 18 January 1913

‘American Mission’, *Times*, 13 April 1918

‘Americans and the Tobacco Trade’, *Belfast News-Letter*, 21 September 1901

‘A Motto for Every Day of the Month’, *Vancouver Daily World*, 15 January 1912

‘Amusements’, *Bexhill-on-Sea Observer*, 25 October 1913

‘Amusements’, *London Mainly About People*, 8 November 1902

‘Amusements’, *Monroe News-Star*, 11 November 1915

‘Amusements’, *Portsmouth Evening News*, 21 February 1913

‘Amusements’, *Sun* [New York], 13 October 1885

‘An “Academy of Dramatic Art”’, *Era*, 2 December 1877

‘An Actor on the Four Arts’, *Gloucester Journal*, 4 November 1922

‘An “All-Star” Cast’, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 7 March 1917

‘An Appeal to Men’, *London Daily News*, 11 March 1909

‘A National Theatre’, *Era*, 23 May 1908

‘An Eloquent Advocate’, *Sheffield Daily Independent*, 1 September 1909

‘A New Hotel at Sidmouth’, *London Evening Standard*, 9 March 1904

‘A New Play, “The Passing of the Third Floor Back” At the St. James’s’, *Graphic*, 5 September 1908

‘An Ideal Joke’, *Era*, 22 November 1916

‘Another Honour to my Calling’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 3 June 1913

‘A Portrait of Forbes-Robertson’, *Folkestone Express*, 28 February 1906

‘A Professional Matinee’, *Era*, 8 July 1899

Archard, Eliza. ‘*Mary Anderson*’, *Helena Weekly Herald*, 5 November 1885

‘A Royal Matinee. Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson’s Return To The Stage’, *Globe*, 5 March, 1917

‘Arrangements for To-Day’, *Times*, 25 January 1917

‘A Scene from the Gaumont Great Film, “Hamlet.”’, *Illustrated Films Monthly*, September 1913

‘Association Football’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 April 1913

‘At the Theatres’, *Omaha Daily Bee*, 6 February 1916

‘Author and the Cinematograph’, *Bioscope*. 15 May 1913

‘Avenue Theatre’, *London Evening Standard*, 12 February 1897

‘A Welcome Return’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 February 1917

‘Balfour Calls on America to Rush Troops’, *New York Tribune*, 16 April 1918

Beerbohm, Max. ‘The Passing of the Third Floor Back’, *Saturday Review*, 5 September 1908, in *Around Theatres*, ed. by Max Beerbohm (London: Rupert Hart-Davis, 1953)

‘Big Actors for Barrie’, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 18 May 1916

Black, Helen. C. ‘Half-Hours with Celebrities’, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 10 February 1895

—. ‘Half-Hours with Celebrities’, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 24 February 1895

Bond, Acton. ‘To The Editor of the Era’, *Era*, 2 June 1900

Brenon, Herbert. ‘Popularity of Star System Rapidly Diminishing’, *Exhibitors Herald*, 5 Jan 1918

‘British Women’s Hospital’, *Western Mail*, 28 August 1915

‘Britannia Theatre’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 26 March 1881

‘Broadbrim’s New York Letter’, *Carbon Advocate*, 24 October 1885

“‘Caesar and Cleopatra’ At the Savoy”, *Sporting Life*, 26 November 1907

‘Caesar and Cleopatra At The Savoy Theatre’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 7 December 1907

‘Caesar & Cleopatra,’ *London Daily News*, 26 November 1907

Carados, ‘Dramatic & Musical Gossip’, *Referee*, 19 June 1887

Carados, ‘Dramatic & Musical Gossip’, *Referee*, 26 June 1887

‘Carnegie Defends Kaiser’s Efforts to Maintain Peace’, *Evening Public Ledger*, 25 September 1914

Carstone, Sydney. ‘Ladies Letter’, *Northern Whig*, 22 December 1908

‘Centenary’, *Stage*, 15 January 1953

‘Children’s Employment Bill,’ *Stage*, 28 May 1903

‘Chit Chat’, *Stage*, 17 May 1900

‘Chit Chat’, *Stage*, 17 October 1912

‘Chit Chat’, *Stage*, 3 April 1913

‘Chit Chat’, *Stage*, 5 June 1913

‘City and County’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 31 August 1901

‘Claims Theatre is Running at a Loss’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 20 March 1912

Collingwood, Frances. ‘Forbes-Robertson Centenary’, *Stage*, 15 January 1953

‘Commercial Reports’, *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 28 September 1901

‘Commons’, *Illustrated London News*, 28 August 1880

‘Concerning Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell Tour’, *New York Tribune*, 24 February 1916

‘Conscription Favoured by Forbes-Robertson’, *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, 8 October 1915

‘Conservative & Unionist Women’s Franchise Association. Mr. Forbes Robertson at Kineton’, *Warwick and Warwickshire Advertiser & Leamington Gazette*, 15 July 1911

‘Cornwall’, *Royal Cornwall Gazette*, 13 August 1880

‘County Notes’, *Sussex Agricultural Express*, 31 March 1916

‘Court Circular’, *The Times*, 27 February 1917

‘Court News’, *The Times*, 18 September 1901

‘Court Theatre’, *Globe*, 28 March 1881

Davidson, James W. ‘Canada’s Finest Theatre’, *Morning Albertan*, 6 February 1912

‘Deny Ever Kissing A Girl’, *Western Kansas World*, 15 July 1916

‘Don’t Care a Cent for Millions’, *Washington Herald*, 11 February 1916

‘Drama’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 March 1881

‘Drama’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 September 1885

‘Drama’, *London Daily News*, 13 September 1876

‘Drama of the Day’, *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 6 August 1908

‘Dramatic and Lyric’, *Salt Lake Herald*, 28 March 1886

‘Dramatic and Lyric’, *Salt Lake Herald*, 17 July 1887

‘Dramatic and Musical’, *Glasgow Herald*, 13 February 1897

‘Dramatic Gossip’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 15 October 1904

‘Dramatic Gossip’, *Referee*, 7 January 1912

‘Dramatic Notes’, *New York Tribune*, 21 August 1887

‘Drury Lane Hamlets’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 1/4/5/7/9 April 1913

‘Drury Lane Theatre’, *The Times*, 24 March 1913

E. C. S., ‘Some Thoughts on Mr. Tree’s Academy of Acting’, *Bystander*, 16 March 1904

Edwards, Robert. ‘Mail Contract’, *Calgary Eye Opener*, 10 February 1912

‘Elocution, Etc.’, *Kent & Sussex Courier*, 2 June 1916

Emmet, Emily. ‘Forbes-Robertson Is Warm Advocate of Equal Suffrage’, *Bridgeport Evening Farmer*, 18 May 1915

‘Empire Theatre’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 28 December 1908

‘Empire Theatre’, *Edmonton Journal*, 3 February 1912

‘End War Or It Will End Us’, *Globe*, 15 April 1918

‘Entertainments’, *Dundee Evening Telegraph*, 7 October 1913

‘Exhibition of the Royal Academy’, *Morning Chronicle*, 4 May 1850

‘Facts and Faces’, *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 28 September 1895

‘Family Parties’, *Daily Mirror*, 10 June 1916

‘Famous Actors’ Memories’, *Stage*, 26 March 1925

‘Farewell of Forbes-Robertson, 1913, Drury Lane Theatre,’ *The Play Pictorial* (Vol. XXI, No. 129), March 1913, p. 111, in M&M, BTC (GB2649-MM-PA-FJO)

‘Fazio; or, The Italian Wife’s Revenge’, *Stage*, 20 May 1887

‘Filmland Gossip’, *Era*, 12 September 1917

‘First National Buys ‘Third Floor Back’ Film Through Weber’, *Exhibitors Herald*, 20 April 1918

‘For and About Women’, *Times and Democrat*, 3 June 1866

‘Forbes-Robertson and Bernard Shaw’, *Era*, 22 March 1913

‘Forbes-Robertson At Golf’, *Bournemouth Graphic*, 21 February 1913

‘Forbes-Robertson at Home in England’, *Bournemouth Graphic*, 21 February 1913

‘Forbes-Robertson at Plymouth’, *Era*, 8 March 1913

‘Forbes-Robertson at the Lyric’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 13 January 1912

‘Forbes-Robertson at the Lyric Feb. 5’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 18 January 1912

‘Forbes-Robertson Coming to the Lyric’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 18 January 1912

‘Forbes-Robertson’, *Devon and Exeter Gazette*, 29 January 1913

‘Forbes-Robertson Discusses the Advanced Theatre: A World-wide Evolution of Unusual Dramatic Qualities’, *New York Times*, 10 October 1909

‘Forbes-Robertson Filmed’, *New York Tribune*, 4 November 1917

‘Forbes-Robertson Film Nears Completion’, *Motography*, 22 December 1917

Forbes-Robertson, ‘How I Created My Greatest Part’, *Delineator*, v. 73, January-March 1909,
<https://hdl.handle.net/2027/osu.32435065936825>

‘Forbes Robertson in Chesterfield’, *Derbyshire Courier*, 12 February 1921

‘Forbes-Robertson in “The Passing of the Third Floor Back,”’ *Calgary Daily Herald*, 1 February 1912

‘Forbes-Robertson—Irving’s Successor’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 2 February 1912

Forbes-Robertson, Johnston. ‘National Theatre’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 June 1916

‘Forbes Robertson Opens Playhouse’, *Albertan*, 6 February 1912

‘Forbes-Robertson Returns to England’, *Exhibitors Herald*, 29 December 1917

‘Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *Beverley and East Riding Recorder*, 18 January 1913

‘Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 2 June 1913

‘Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *New York Times*, 29 April 1916

‘Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *Topeka State Journal*, 13 November 1915

‘Forbes Robertson’s “Hamlet”’, *Motography*, 26 July 1913

‘Forbes-Robertson’s Send-Off’, *Era*, 14 June 1913

‘Forbes-Robertson’s Visit to Exeter’, *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 8 January 1913

‘Forbes Robertson to Open Calgary’s Fine New Theatre Feb. 5’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 22 January 1912

‘Forbes-Robertson Warmly Welcomed by Local Audience’, *Calgary News-Telegram*, 6 February 1912

‘Forbes-Robertson Wins’, *New York Tribune*, 21 February 1915

“‘For the Crown,’ at the Lyceum’, *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 28 February 1896

‘For the Star and Garter Home’, *New York Times*, 9 November, 1915

‘Four Centuries of the New Gallery’, *Globe*, 14 December 1912

‘From London Town’, *Social Review (Dublin)*, 11 January 1896

‘From Our London Correspondent’, *Dundee Advertiser*, 1 January 1896

‘From Our London Correspondent’, *Leeds Mercury*, 24 January 1896

‘From Our London Correspondent’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 24 January 1896

Furniss, Harry. ‘Where are the English films?’ *Bioscope*, 13 March 1913

G. A. M., ‘Get a Big Navy Actor’s Advice’, *El Paso Herald*, 30 November 1915

‘Gallery Kinema’, *Eastbourne Gazette*, 8 October 1913

‘G.B.S.’ *Tatler*, 4 December 1907

‘German Lies have a Bad Time’, *Daily Gazette for Middlesborough*, 16 October 1915

G. F. H., ‘The World of the Theatre’, *Illustrated London News*, 11 April 1925

Gore, Arthur.Holmes. ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 23 September 1901

‘Gossip of the Day’, *Portsmouth Evening News*, 18 February 1897

‘Governesses’ Holidays’, *London Daily News*, 25 June 1904

‘Great Protest Meeting Against Forcible Feeding’, *Votes for Women*, 28 March 1913

Gregory, Kenneth. ‘This week is the centenary of Sir George Alexander [...]’, *Tatler*, 18 June 1958

Grein, J. T. ‘A Prince of His Calling’, *Times*, January 1913, repr. in *Bournemouth Graphic*, 7 March 1913

—. ‘The World of the Theatre’, *Illustrated London News*, 17 April 1920

“‘Hamlet,’ at Drury Lane’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 31 March 1913

“‘Hamlet’ at over £3 a Second: Sir J. Forbes-Robertson Acting Shakespeare’s Tragedy for the Cinematograph’, *Illustrated London News*, 5 July 1913

“‘Hamlet’ At the Lyceum’, *Era*, 18 September 1897

“‘Hamlet’ at the Lyceum’, *Sporting Life*, 14 September 1897

“‘Hamlet’ at the New Gallery’, *Bioscope*, 2 October 1913

“‘Hamlet’”, *Bioscope*, 25 September 1913

‘Hamlet’, *Kinematograph and Lantern Weekly*, 24 July 1913

“‘Hamlet’ on the Cinema’, *London Standard*, 23 September 1913

“‘Hamlet’ on the Film’, *Globe*, 19 September 1913

‘Hamlet on the Film’, *Shoreditch Observer*, 20 September 1913

“‘Hamlet’ on the Screen’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 September 1913

Hampden, Walter. *Vogue*, 15 January 1923

‘Hampstead Picture Playhouse’, *Hendon & Finchley Times*, 7 November 1913

Haviland, Frank. ‘Frank Haviland’s Series of Shakespearean Characters’, *Illustrated London News*, 30 October 1909

‘Haymarket—Saturday Night’, *Referee*, 1 February 1880

‘Haymarket Theatre’, *Morning Post*, 2 February 1880

H. C. N. ‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’, *Referee*, 30 August 1908

‘Hippodrome Todmorden’, *Todmorden & District News*, 5 October 1917

‘His Majesty’s Theatre’, *London Daily News*, 9 July 1903

HMP, ‘The New Hamlet at the Lyceum Theatre: The Entry of Fortinbras in the Final Scene’, *Graphic*, 18 September 1897

Holder, Stephen. ‘The Stewart & Woolf silhouettes.’ *Picture Postcard Monthly*, December 2010

‘Hospital Nurses’, *Times*, 11 December 1916

Howard, Keble. ‘Motley Notes’, *Sketch*, 11 June 1913

How, Harry. ‘Illustrated Interviews. No. XLIII.—“The New Romeo and Juliet”’, *The Strand Magazine*, September 1895, in *Internet Archive*,
<https://archive.org/stream/TheStrandMagazineAnIllustratedMonthly/TheStrandMagazine1895bVol.XJul-dec#page/n263/mode/2up>, pp. 252-266

‘Ideal,’ *Era*, 23 May 1917

‘Ideal’s New Comedy Series’, *Bioscope*, 14 September 1916

‘In Stageland’, *Globe*, 13 June 1917

‘In Suburbia’, *Bioscope*, 13 June 1912

‘Items of Interest’, *Votes for Women*, 6 June 1913

J. F. R., ‘MADAME MODJESKA’, *New Monthly Magazine*, December 1881

‘Johnston Forbes-Robertson, Aristocrat of the Theatre,’ *Stage*, 11 November 1937

‘July 7th’, *Motion Picture News*, 17 July 1915

Junior, Jehu. ‘Men of the Day. No. 619’, *Vanity Fair*, 2 May 1895

J. W., ‘Round the Theatres’, *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 21 March 1914

“‘King Arthur’ at the Lyceum”, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 20 January 1895

‘Lady Cowdray’s Achievement’, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 24 March 1917

‘Lady Forbes-Robertson’s “Women for Men” Appeal’, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 3 January 1916

‘Last Night’s Theatricals’, *Lloyd’s Weekly Newspaper*, 27 March 1881

‘Last Night’s Theatricals’, *Reynolds’s Newspaper*, 1 February 1880

'Last of the Actor-Managers', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 8 November 1937
 'Letters to the Editor', *Leicester Daily Post*, 3 March 1913
 'Letters to the Editor', *Stage*, 12 May 1904
 'Little Stories of the Day', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 10 April 1913
 Littlewood, S. R. 'Our National Theatre', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 June 1916
 —. 'National Theatre', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 June 1916
 —. 'The National Theatre at last', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 November 1916
 'L.L.C. Licensing Affairs', *Bioscope*, 20 November 1913
 'London Correspondence', *Freeman's Journal*, 5 June 1896
 'London Gossip', *South Australian Register*, 21 May 1881
 'London Letter', *Western Daily Press*, 16 March 1896
 'London Theatres', *Stage*, 3 September 1908
 'London Theatricals', *Scotsman*, 16 January 1896
 'Lyceum Theatre', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 27 June 1896
 'Lyceum Theatre', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 1 August 1896
 'Lyceum Theatre', *London Evening Standard*, 16 January 1896
 'Lyceum Theatre', *London Evening Standard*, 27 July 1896
 'Lyceum Theatre', *Morning Post*, 16 January 1896
 'Lyceum Theatre,' *Morning Post*, 4 June 1896.
 'Lyceum—Saturday Night', *Referee*, 13 January 1895
 'Lyric Theatre Is Opened', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 6 September 1904
 MacKinnon, Alan. 'Sir Johnston Forbes Robertson', *The Carthusian*, July 1913
 'Making her First "Hall" Mark', *Tatler*, 13 March 1916
 'Manchester', *Era*, 30 April 1887
 'Manless Plays', *Daily Mirror*, 12 April 1916
 'Market is Extremely Active at Present', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 13 February 1912
 'Marriage of Mr. Forbes Robertson and Miss Gertrude Elliott', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 January 1901
 'Mary Anderson at Stratford-on-Avon', *Liverpool Mercury*, 31 August 1885
 'Mary Anderson at Stratford-Upon-Avon', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 31 August 1885
 'Mary Anderson', *Salt Lake Herald*, 30 March 1886
 'Mary Anderson's Anglicism', *Salt Lake Herald*, 11 April 1886
 'Mary Anderson's Private Secretary', *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, 29 January 1886

‘Mary at Stratford’, *St. Paul Daily Globe*, 6 September 1885

M.A.S., ‘Letters to the Editor’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 16 September 1901

‘Masks and Faces’, *Era*, 8 November 1916

‘Masks and Faces’, *Era*, 6 December 1916

‘Masks and Faces’, *Era*, 7 March 1917

‘Masks and Faces Film’, *Stage*, 17 May 1917

‘Masks and Faces’, *Hull Daily Mail*, 25 May 1917

‘Masks and Faces’, *Nottingham Evening Post*, 31 May 1917

‘Mdme. Modjeska as Juliet’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 March 1881

‘Merry-Go-Round’, *London and Provincial Entr’acte*, 1 August 1896

“‘Michael and His Lost Angel’ at the Empire Theatre”, *New York Times*, 16 January 1896

‘Michael and his Lost Angel’, *Sketch*, 22 January 1896

‘Middlesex Sessions’, *The Times*, 13 October 1860

‘Midst the Madding Throng’, *St. Paul Daily Globe*, 21 March 1886

Milne, Peter. ‘Hamlet’, *Motion Picture News*, 10 July 1915

‘Miss Anderson at the Royalty’, *Glasgow Evening Star*, 6 May 1884

‘Miss Mary Anderson as Rosalind’, *Morning Post*, 31 August 1885

‘Miss Mary Anderson in Bohemia’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 25 April 1887

‘Miss Mary Anderson’, *Memphis Daily Appeal*, 17 December 1885

‘Miss Mary Anderson to Appear as Rosalind’, *Morning Journal and Courier*, 8 December 1885

‘Miss Terry Interviewed’, *Bristol Mercury*, 11 January 1895

Moderwell, H. K., ‘Allied Labor Unit for Victory – Divided on Means’, *New York Tribune*, 16 June 1918

‘Mr. and Mrs. Forbes-Robertson’, *Western Daily Mercury*, 7 May 1912

‘Mr Forbes Robertson and Nelson’s Memory’, *Edinburgh Evening News*, 18 February 1897

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson and Women’s Suffrage’, *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 7 April 1909

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson at Drury Lane’, *Referee*, 22 December 1912

‘Mr Forbes Robertson at “The Lane”’, *Western Daily Press*, 24 March 1913

‘Mr Forbes Robertson at the Lyceum’, *Scotsman*, 20 November 1912

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson at the Prince’s Theatre’, *Clifton Society*, 26 September 1912

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson in Leeds’, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 24 August 1909

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson On the Ability of Women’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 27 April 1909

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson on the Suffrage Cause’, *Sheffield Daily Independent*, 1 September 1909

‘Mr Forbes Robertson’s Farewell’, *Globe*, 13 February 1913

‘Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Farewell’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 24 March 1913

‘Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Farewell’, *Northern Whig*, 18 March 1913

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 March 1913

‘Mr Forbes Robertson’s Farewell’, *Western Daily Press*, 14 September 1912

‘Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Farewell Season’, *The Scotsman*, 24 March 1913

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell Season at Drury Lane—The Revival of “Hamlet”’, *Sphere*, 29 March 1913

‘Mr Forbes Robertson’s “Hamlet”’, *Western Daily Press*, 13 November 1900

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s Hamlet’, *Sketch*, 27 October 1897

‘Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Next English Season’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 January 1912

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson on the Suffrage Cause’, *Sheffield Daily Independent*, 1 September 1909

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s “Othello” Revival’, *Illustrated London News*, 24 May 1913

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’s Plans’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 27 March 1913

‘Mr. Forbes-Robertson’, *Portsmouth Evening News*, 24 February 1913

‘Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Reappearance’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 26 November 1907

‘Mr. Forbes Robertson’s Visit’, *Horfield and Bishopston Record and Montpelier & District Free Press*, 16 November 1907

‘Mr. G. Bernard Shaw’s “Caesar and Cleopatra”’, *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 26 November 1907

‘Mr. G. Bernard Shaw’s New Play’, *Morning Post*, 26 November 1907

‘Mr. J. Forbes-Robertson in Leeds’, *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 24 August 1909

‘Mr J. K. Jerome’s New Play’, *Hull Daily Mail*, 2 September 1908

‘Mr. Sherman’s Bad Break’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 19 March 1912

‘Mrs Gerard to assist Belgians’, *New York Tribune*, 10 October 1914

‘Mrs Langtry as Rosalind’, *Era*, 30 September 1882

‘Mr Tree’s Academy’, *London Evening Standard*, 5 February 1906

‘Mr. W. T. Stead’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 17 April 1912

‘Multiple Display Advertisements’, *Times*, 9 April 1917

‘Music and Drama’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 26 January 1912

‘Music and Drama’, *East London Observer*, 19 April 1913

'Music and Drama', *Paisley & Renfrewshire Gazette*, 1 September 1888
 'Music and Drama', *Portland Daily Press*, 22 October 1885
 'Music and the Drama', *Glasgow Herald*, 25 January 1897
 'Music and the Drama', *Northern Whig*, 22 June 1896
 'Music and the Drama', *People*, 4 April 1915
 'Music and the Drama', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 2 March 1912
 'Music Hall Pictures', *Chester Chronicle*, 14 September 1918
 'National Theatre Conference', *Era*, 27 November 1929
 'National Theatre', *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 26 March 1908
 'Native labour on the Rand', *Globe*, 7 October 1913
 'Necessity Making of Great Thespian', *Edmonton Journal*, 8 February 1912
 'Need of Publicity', *Times*, 1 May 1918
 'Nelson on the Stage', *Era*, 27 February 1897
 'Newcastle and District', *Bioscope*, 18 September 1913
 'New Firms for Calgary', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 14 July 1904
 'New Men's Furnishings and Clothing Business', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 16 December 1908
 'New Play To-Morrow', *Times*, 8 May 1917
 'News from Filmland', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 March 1917
 'News in Brief', *Wheeling Daily Intelligencer*, 9 October 1885
 Newton, Henry Chance. 'Phelps and Charles Warner', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 17 March 1913
 'Notices', *Reading Observer*, 11 October 1913
 'N.Y.U. to Confer Honorary Degrees', *Sun*, New York, 9 June 1915
 'Obiter Scripta', *St James's Gazette*, 2 April 1903
 'Oowana Soap', *The Reporter*, 13 November 1908
 "'Othello" at the Lake', *Daily Herald*, 21 May 1913
 'Our London Correspondent', *Bolton Evening News*, 16 December 1895
 'Our London Correspondent', *Swindon Advertiser and North Wilts Chronicle*, 13 June 1896
 'Our London Gossip', *Bucks Herald*, 18 May 1850
 'Our London Letter', *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 15 December 1908
 'Our London Letter', *Bognor Regis Observer*, 16 March 1904
 'Our London Letter', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 11 January 1896
 'Our London Letter', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 8 February 1896
 'Our Mary Won't Mary', *Evening Star*, 14 November 1885

‘Our View’, *Bioscope*, 12 June 1913

‘Our View’, *Bioscope*, 14 August 1913

Pacatus, I. M. *Nizhegorodshi listok*, 4 July 1896, trans. by Leda Swan, in Jay Leda, *Kino: A History of the Russian and Soviet Film* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1960), pp. 407-409

‘Paris fashions show a conservative note’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 24 January 1912

Partridge, Bernard. ‘Mr. Punch’s Personalities’, *Punch*, 3 March 1926

Paston, George. ‘The Young Idea’, *Stage*, 16 December 1915

‘Patriotism and the Actor’, *Era*, 30 June 1915

‘Personal’, *Illustrated London News*, 7 March 1903

‘Personal Items’, *Leamington Spa Courier*, 4 April 1913

Picture Palace News, 22 July 1916, p. 212

‘Pictures and Players in the City’, *Aberdeen Evening Express*, 31 March 1917

‘Plays and Players’, *Globe*, 21 April 1904

‘Prince of Actors’, *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 14 October 1912

‘Princess’s Theatre’, *London Evening Standard*, 6 June 1881

‘Professional’, *Western Gazette*, 29 August 1913

‘Provincial Productions’, *Stage*, 20 August 1908

‘Public Notices’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 27 August 1901

‘Queen’s Hall’, *Evening Chronicle*, 26 September 1913

Quisquis, ‘City Chat’, *Exeter and Plymouth Gazette*, 28 January 1913

‘Real Dramatic Treat’, *El Paso Herald*, 25 November 1915

‘Red Pep’s Philosophy’, *Topeka State Journal*, 22 February 1916

‘Remarkable Scene’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 June 1913

‘Rice Praises Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson’, *Washington Post*, 16 March 1914

“‘Romeo and Juliet,’ At the Court Theatre”, *London Evening Standard*, 27 March 1881

‘Rose Theater, High Point, N. C.’, *Moving Picture World*, 7 June 1913

Ross, Derek. ‘A Kinema Theatre’, *Daily Herald*, 10 March 1913

‘Royal Dramatic College’, *Morning Post*, 24 April 1865

‘Royal General Theatrical Fund’, *London Evening Standard*, 22 May 1903

‘Sayings & Doings of Cheltenham’, *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 10 November 1900

‘Sayings and Doings of Cheltenham’, *Cheltenham Looker-On*, 30 June 1917

‘School of Dramatic Art’, *Daily Telegraph & Courier (London)*, 26 April 1904

‘Scottish Women’s Hospitals’, *Scotsman*, 9 December 1916

S., E. “‘Hamlet the Reformer’”: Mr. Forbes-Robertson in his Greatest Part’, *Votes for Women*, 4 April 1913

‘Shakespeare Celebrations To Go On’, *Aberdeen Daily Journal*, 18 October 1915

‘Shakespeare Day’, *Stage*, 24 April 1930

‘Shakespeare Hut Concert’, *Era*, 13 November 1918

‘Shakespeare in Nineteen Tableaux’, *Sketch*, 21 September 1898

‘Shakespeare Memorial Theatre’, *Era*, 11 June 1910

‘Shakespeare’s Hut’, *Daily Mirror*, 7 June 1917

‘Shakespeare Stage Exhibition’, *The Times*, 25 January 1917

Shaw, George Bernard. ‘Bernard Shaw and the Heroic Actor’, *Play Pictorial*, Vol. X, October 1907

‘Sheffield Local News’, *Sheffield and Rotherham Independent*, 7 September 1901

‘Sheffield Notes & Jottings’, *Sheffield Evening Telegraph*, 7 September 1901

‘Silent Film of 1913 Brings Back a Great Hamlet’, *Times*, 25 April 1960

‘Sir J. Forbes-Robertson’s Farewell’, *The Times*, 7 June 1913

‘Sir J. Forbes Robertson’s Farewell Tour’, *People*, 3 May 1914

‘Sir Johnstone Forbes-Robertson Speaks of his Long Life...’, *Arizona Republican*, 4 December 1915

‘Situations Vacant’, *Gloucester Journal*, 17 May 1913

‘Sold out in Six Hours’, *Star-Phoenix*, 6 February 1912

‘Some reflections of a “Passerby”’, *Calgary Daily Herald*, 10 January 1912

‘Some Thoughts on Mr. Tree’s Academy of Acting’, *Bystander*, 16 March 1904

‘South Eastern Electric Theatres Ltd.’, *Bioscope*, 24 July 1913

‘Speaker and Actress Suffragist’, *Aberdeen Press and Journal*, 11 January 1913

‘Spirit of the News’, *Shipping Gazette and Lloyd’s List*, 27 January 1896

‘Stage Subjection’, *Era*, 27 October 1900

‘Stage Whispers’, *Sporting Times (USA)*, 5 May 1917

‘Star and Garter Matinee’, *Globe*, 9 June 1916

‘Stratford Festival’, *Birmingham Gazette and Express*, 29 April 1909

Strickland, Jane E. ‘Mrs Strickland on “Smaller Men who have Succeeded Gladstone”’, *Hastings and St. Leonards Observer*, 22 March 1913

‘Striking Tribute to Mr Forbes Robertson’, *Western Daily Press*, 4 April 1913

‘Sunlight Soaps’, *Wigan Observer*, 23 July 1884

Tassell, A. J. ‘J. Forbes Robertson (O. C.), Painter and Player’, *The Grey-friar*. Volume III, No. 43, August 1898

‘The Academy of Dramatic Art’, *Stage*, 24 December 1913

‘The Actors’ Association’, *Era*, 7 February 1891

‘The Actors’ Association’, *Era*, 21 March 1891

‘The Actors’ Association’, *Era*, 5 March 1892

‘The Actors’ Association’, *Era*, 2 April 1898

‘The Actors’ Association. Annual General Meeting’, *Stage*, 5 April 1917

‘The Actors’ Association Scheme’, *Era*, 16 December 1899

‘The Actors’ Benevolent Fund’, *Era*, 24 February 1883

‘The Actresses’ Franchise League’, *Votes for Women*, 24 December 1908

‘The Actresses’ Suffrage League’, *The Stage*, 24 December 1908

‘The America Invasion’, *Northern Whig*, 26 September 1901

‘The American Stage’, *Stage*, 27 January 1916

‘The Artists’ Rifles’, *Belfast Newsletter*, 7 November 1916

‘The Artists’ Rifles’, *Newcastle Journal*, 13 November 1916

‘Theatre’, *Spirit of the Times*, 1886

‘Theatre and Musichall Gossip’, *People*, 27 May 1917

‘Theatre Royal, Next Week’, *Manchester Courier and Lancashire General Advertiser*, 10 October 1904

‘Theatres’, *Graphic*, 16 September 1876

‘Theatres’, *Graphic*, 26 March 1881

‘Theatres’, *Graphic*, 26 January 1884

‘Theatres’, *Graphic*, 5 September 1885

‘Theatres’, *Graphic*, 23 April 1887

‘Theatrical and Musical Notes’, *Morning Post*, 6 July 1896

‘Theatrical Families’, *Sketch*, 22 August 1894

‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 15 December 1883

‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 15 March 1884

‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 21 June 1884

‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 2 May 1891

‘Theatrical Gossip’, *Era*, 15 July 1893

'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 27 February 1909
 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 10 July 1909
 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 3 May 1913
 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 9 July 1913
 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 1 October 1913
 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 19 November 1913
 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 3 June 1914
 'Theatrical Gossip', *Era*, 18 November 1914
 'Theatrical News', *Bristol Mercury*, 17 September 1887
 'Theatricals', *Sportsman*, 28 March 1881
 'The "Barrie" Charity Matinee at the Coliseum', *Era*, 14 June 1916
 'The Bioscope', *Bioscope*, 2 November 1916
 'The Coliseum Matinee', *Daily Mirror*, 24 March 1917
 'The Coming Return of Mr. Forbes-Robertson', *Bystander*, 19 August 1908
 'The Duke's Diary', *Sporting Times*, 25 November 1916
The Era, 7 June 16
 'The Exhibition of the Royal Academy', *Times*, 9 May 1850
 'The Farewell of the Foremost: Forbes-Robertson's Leave-Taking', *Boston Evening Transcript*,
 24 January 1914
 'The Filming of "Hamlet"', *Bioscope*, 24 July 1913
 'The Funds of the Militants', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 6 June 1914
 'The Growth of the Cinema', *Bioscope*, 12 December 1912
 'The Historical Congress', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 15 March 1913
 'The Imperial Tobacco Company', *Yorkshire Post and Leeds Intelligencer*, 14 December 1901
 'The Jew of Prague', *Referee*, 21 April 1912
 The 'Lantern Man', 'In Pictureland', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 25 September 1913
 'The Letters of Eve', *Tatler*, 31 May 1916
 'The Lighter Side of an Agitation', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 14 February 1913
 'The Looker On', *Sportsman*, 22 August 1885
 'The Manufacturers of Ogden's "Guinea Gold" Cigarettes', *Manchester Evening News*, 3
 September 1901
 'The Mother of Little Miss Forbes-Robertson', *Sketch*, 2 October 1901
 'The National Theatre', *Era*, 16 April 1910

'The National Theatre Scheme', *The Times*, 6 December 1913
 'The New Gallery Kinema', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 29 September 1913
 'The New Gallery Kinema', *Stage*, 16 January 1913
 'The New Play at the Lyceum', *Sketch*, 26 February 1896
 'The Oowana Soap Company, Limited', *Bath Chronicle*, 23 May 1901
 "'The Passing of the Third Floor Back'", *Bioscope*, 25 July 1918
 'The Passing of the Third Floor Back', *Tatler*, 25 April 1917
 'The Picture House', *Belfast News-Letter*, 30 September 1913
 'The Picture House, Sackville Street', *Dublin Daily Express*, 27 September 1913
 'The Pit at the Haymarket Theatre', *Globe*, 2 February 1880
 'The Playhouses', *Illustrated London News*, 29 August 1885
 'The Playhouses', *Illustrated London News*, 20 February 1897
 'The Prince of Wales Theatre', *Birmingham Daily Gazette*, 15 October 1912
 The Prompter, 'P.I.P. Playgoer', *Penny Illustrated Paper*, 7 December 1907
 'The Real Forbes-Robertson', *Bournemouth Graphic*, 28 February 1913
 'The Real Forbes-Robertson', *Era*, 8 March 1913
 'The Sainted Emma', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 12 February 1897
 "'The School for Scandal" At The Lyceum', *Sketch*, 24 June 1896
 'The Screen and the Stage', *Era*, 22 November 1916
 'The Service of Art', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 June 1913
 'The Social Review', *The Social Review (Dublin)*, 13 June 1896
 Thespis, 'Letters to the Editor', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 18 September 1901
 Thespis, 'Letters to the Editor', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 24 September 1901
 'The Stroller', *Sporting Life*, 19 August 1885
 The Stroller, "'Magda" At The Lyceum Theatre', *Sporting Life*, 6 June 1896
 'The Suffragets: Hints for Male Advocates of "Votes for Women"', *Graphic*, 13 February 1909
 'The Talk of the Town', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 22 March 1913
 'The Talk of the Town', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 September 1913
 'The Theatre and the War', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 10 June 1916
 'The Theatre', *Globe*, 24 March 1913
 'The Theatre', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 28 February 1896
 'The Theatre', *Globe*, 6 May 1913
 'The Theatre and the War', *Birmingham Daily Post*, 10 June 1916

'The Theatre of Yesterday, To-day, and To-morrow', *Century Magazine*, February 1914
 'The Theatres', *London Daily News*, 13 December 1880
 'The Theatrical Wedding of the Year', *Sketch*, 26 December 1900
 'The Tobacco Trade War', *Yorkshire Evening Post*, 22 October 1901
 'The Tobacco War', *Northern Whig*, 31 October 1901
 'The Tobacco War', *Oxfordshire Weekly News*, 30 October 1901
 'The Tobacco Trade', *The Times*, 29 September 1902
 'The Trumpet Call', *Era*, 8 August 1891
 'The Visit of Mr Forbes Robertson', *Western Daily Press*, 11 September 1909
 "'The Winter's Tale" at Nottingham', *Referee*, 24 April 1887
 'Things Theatrical', *Sporting Times*, 18 January 1896
 'This Picture Free', *Bystander*, 21 July 1920
 Thomas, W. Moy. 'The Shades of Night', *Graphic*, 21 March 1896
 —. 'The Theatres', *Graphic*, 18 September 1897
 'Tobacco War', *Dundee Evening Post*, 3 December 1901
 'Today's London Letter', *Edinburgh Evening News*, 25 January 1897
 'To Help the Helpless; by Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson', *Graphic*, 7 April 1917
 'To Make Them Forget', *Sketch*, 28 November 1917
 'To-night's Farewell', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 6 June 1913
 'To The British Public', *Sportsman*, 2 December 1901
 'To The British Public', *Western Morning News*, 2 December 1901
 'Two Actor-Artists', *Sketch*, 25 March 1903
 'Two Eminent Artistes', *Era*, 1 March 1913
 'Valuable Work Has Been Accomplished', *Dundee Courier*, 13 December 1916
 Vedette, 'Round the Theatres', *Illustrated Sporting and Dramatic News*, 5 September 1908
 Vezin, Hermann. 'A National Theatre', *Era*, 14 August 1897
 'Votes for Women', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1909
 Von Zedlitz, Baroness. 'Some Famous Stage Lovers No. 2. – A chat with Mr. Johnston Forbes-Robertson', *The Englishwoman*, 1895, pp. 115-[?], Newspaper Cutting in M&M, BTC, [GB2649-MM-PA-FJO]. 'Votes for Women', *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1909
 'Wants Forbes-Robertson', *Motography*, 24 October 1914
 'What the Press Agents Say', *Calgary Daily Herald*, 29 January 1912

‘With the Metropolitan Showman’, *Bioscope*, 11 January 1912
‘Women and the Vote’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 1 September 1909
‘Women’s Suffrage’, *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, 28 August 1909
Wright, Chester M. ‘England As Seen By American’, *Labor World*, 11 May 1918
—. ‘How They Carry On’, *New York Tribune*, 30 June 1918
‘3 Stage Stars Sail for Europe’, *New York Tribune*, 30 April 1916
‘£1000 Collected at London Meeting’, *Dundee Courier*, 13 December 1916
‘£1000 Collected at London Meeting’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 8 December 1916
‘£10,000 for Scottish Women’s Hospitals’, *Western Daily Press*, 12 June 1917
‘\$8,000 Weekly for Sir Forbes’, *Variety*, December 1917

Artwork

Forbes Robertson in “For the Crown.”, 1898, Cigarette Card in Player’s Cigarettes ‘Actors and Actresses’ series, New York Public Library Digital Collections, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47da-7a48-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99/book?parent=f5baa9d0-c52b-012f-5d95-58d385a7bc34#page/1/mode/1up> [accessed 10 April 2016]

Forbes-Robertson, Johnston. *Ellen Terry*, 1876, oil paint on canvas, 60.8 × 50.6cm, National Portrait Gallery London, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw06271/Ellen-Terry?LinkID=mp04458&role=sit&rNo=2> [accessed 21 October 2014]

—. *The Church Scene in Much Ado about Nothing by William Shakespeare*, 1884, oil paint on canvas, The Players (New York), <http://www.theplayersnyc.org/artwork> [accessed 21 April 2019].

Ford, Edward Onslow. *Statue of Henry Irving as Hamlet*, 1883, marble, Guildhall Art Gallery, London, <http://www.artandarchitecture.org.uk/images/conway/b952b446.html> [accessed 1 May 2019]

Goupil & Co, *Sir Henry Irving*, 1880, photograph after Edwin Longsdon Long photogravure, NPG, London, <https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw194708/Sir-Henry-Irving?LinkID=mp02373&search=sas&sText=henry+irving&displayNo=60&wPage=1&role=sit&rNo=100> [accessed 1 May 2019]

Harcourt, George. *Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson*, 1913, oil paint on canvas, 171 × 88cm, Garrick Club London, <http://garrick.ssl.co.uk/object-g0230> [accessed 21 April 2019]

McEvoy, Ambrose. *Johnston Forbes-Robertson*, 1919, oil paint on canvas, 77 × 63.5cm, Christie's South Kensington, <http://garrick.ssl.co.uk/object-g1116> [accessed 21 April 2019]

Millais, John. Everett. *Christ in the House of His Parents ('The Carpenter's Shop')*, 1850, oil paint on canvas, 86.4 × 139.7cm, Tate, <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/millais-christ-in-the-house-of-his-parents-the-carpenters-shop-n03584> [accessed 1 January 2017].

Rossetti, Dante. Gabriel. *Dante's Dream at the Time of the Death of Beatrice*, c. 1869-1871, oil paint on canvas, 216 × 312.4 cm, National Museums Liverpool (Walker Art Gallery) <http://www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/walker/exhibitions/rossetti/works/latework/dantesdream.aspx> [accessed 21 October 2014]

'Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson (1853-1937)', [1903], photograph, Billy Rose Theatre Division, The New York Public Library Digital Collections. <http://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47de-d81e-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99> [accessed 10 April 2016]

Manuscripts

Add MS 50534, G. B. Shaw Papers: Series 1, Vol. XXVII (ff. 216). British Library.

Add MS 62700, Knight and Forbes-Robertson Papers, Vol. VII. British Library.

GB2649-MM-PA-FJO, M&M, BTC